ALIENS™

OMNIBUS

VOLUME 5

ALIENS™ OMNIBUS

VOLUME 5

DARK HORSE BOOKS®

CONTENTS

ALCHEMY 5

KIDNAPPED 73

SURVIVAL 135

CARGO 203

ALIEN 221

EARTH ANGEL 247

INCUBATION 273

HAVOC 287

LOVESICK 333

LUCKY 361

cover illustration **RICHARD CORBEN**

publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**
series editors **PHIL AMARA, RANDY STRADLEY, DAN THORSLAND, RONNIE NOIZE, BOB SCHRECK, and SCOTT ALLIE**
collection editor **CHRIS WARNER**
designer **JOSH ELLIOTT**
art director **LIA RIBACCHI**

Special thanks to **DEBBIE OLSHAN** at Twentieth Century Fox Licensing.

ALIENS™ OMNIBUS Volume 5

Aliens™ & © 1987, 2008 by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Illustrations and text © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2008 by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. TM indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Dark Horse Books® and the Dark Horse logo are registered trademarks of Dark Horse Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the express written permission of the copyright holders. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in this publication are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, institutions, or locales, without satiric intent, is coincidental.

This volume collects material previously published as the Dark Horse comic-book series *Aliens: Alchemy, Aliens: Survival*, and *Aliens: Havoc*, the Dark Horse graphic novel *Aliens: Kidnapped*, the Dark Horse comic books *Aliens: Earth Angel* and *Aliens: Lovesick*, and stories from the Dark Horse comic-book series *Dark Horse Comics* issues seventeen through nineteen, *Dark Horse Presents* issues one-hundred one and one-hundred two, and *A Decade of Dark Horse* issue three.

Dark Horse Books
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222

darkhorse.com | foxmovies.com

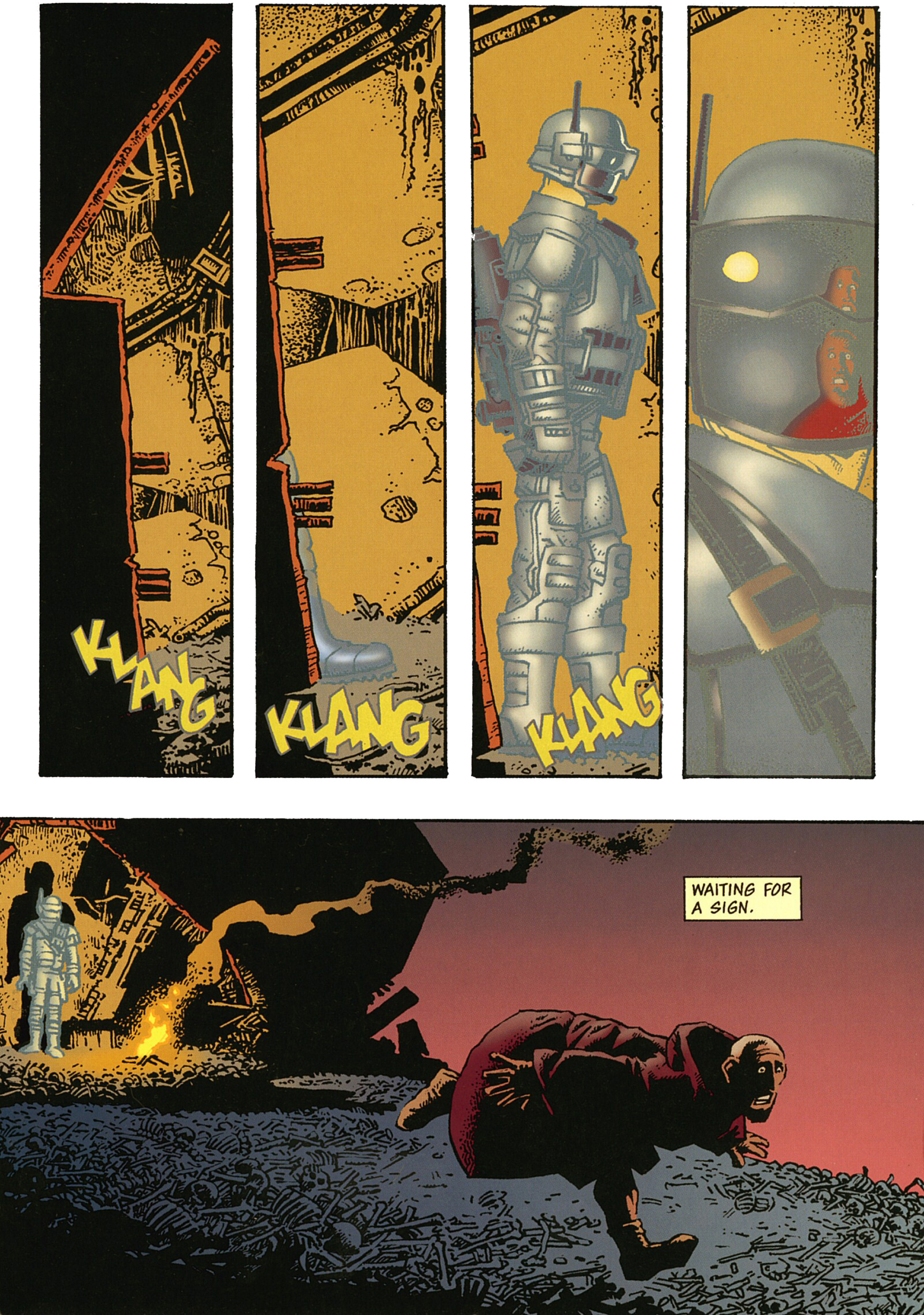
To find a comics shop in your area, call the Comic Shop Locator Service toll-free at 1-888-266-4226

First edition: November 2008
ISBN: 978-1-59307-991-8

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in China

ALIENS™
OMNIBUS

A CRISIS OF FAITH. THAT'S WHAT HE CALLED IT.
"IT MEANS THAT YOU'RE THINKING," HE SAID. "IT MEANS THAT IT'S TIME FOR YOUR PILGRIMAGE."
BUT HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING?
WAITING.
WAITING.
WAITING.
KLANG!


KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
WAITING FOR A SIGN.

THERE!
WE STAIN THE SKIES WITH OUR ARROGANCE!
SO, THIS IS WHAT YOU MEANT BY "GOOD-FAITH NEGOTIATIONS," EH, MUIR?

BUT WHAT ELSE SHOULD I HAVE EXPECTED.
YOU KNOW, I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE HERE.
THAT IS YOUR TRUTH, SISTER HITRESE-- NOT THE TRUTH.
WE ALL HAVE TO BE HERE.
WE ALL HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO ENDURE.
UH-OH, QUOTING SCRIPTURE. WE'RE IN FOR IT NOW.
MS. KARTHA, PLEASE, DON'T BE DISRESPECTFUL. SIT DOWN AND LET'S TRY TO WORK THIS THING OUT.
NO, NO, NO. THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME.
I CAME TO TALK COMPROMISE BUT THE LEGATE HERE, HE CAME TO INVOKE DIVINE AUTHORITY. HOW CAN I CHALLENGE THAT?

NOT TOO LONG AGO, MUIR SAID THAT STEAM POWER WOULD VISIT EVIL UPON THE CITY OF EMERSON.
THE PRICE WE'VE PAID FOR FOUR YEARS OF HEATED HOMES DURING THE WINTER AND ELECTRICAL LIGHTING IS ONE HOUSE FIRE.
AND NOT A DEVIL IN SIGHT.
AS FOR WORKING THINGS OUT, *MAYOR Z.* IT'LL WORK ITSELF OUT IN A FEW WEEKS, WHEN THE SALVAGE REFERENDUM COMES UP FOR A VOTE.
AND IF IT PASSES, *LEGATE*, I'LL WANT THAT MAP.

THE WATERS RUN BITTER AND THE AIR STINGS OUR EYES. THESE ARE THE SIGNS AND WE OURSELVES HAVE MADE THEM REAL.
WE HAVE OPENED THE DOOR FOR THE DARK ONE.
AND I SEEN HIM! THE DARK ONE!!
OR I HEARD 'BOUT HIM, A MONSTER LIKE FROM HELL.
FIRST, HE TAKES YOUR SOUL, THEN KILL YOU, AND DON' STOP KILLIN'. DON' NEVER STOP.
HE COMIN'! HE COMIN'!
ONE IN EVERY CROWD-- OR IS IT TWO?
RACHEL?!

I MUST BE THE ONLY WOMAN ON THE PLANET YOU DON'T ADDRESS AS "SISTER," ASIDE FROM MAMA.
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS IN THE CITY?
I DIDN'T. I CAME OVER TO BREAK UP THE RABBLE.
BUT OLD RURIK TOOK CARE OF THAT FOR ME, SO I WON'T HAVE TO ARREST YOU-- TODAY.
OH, NOW DON'T START.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT, TOCH, BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONE DOING THE PREACHING.
WHAT HAPPENED? YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE GOING TO LEAVE THE LEGATE-SHIP.
I WAS WRONG TO EVER DOUBT IN FIRST-FATHER, RACHEL.
NOW I KNOW I WAS WRONG.

SO I WON'T WATCH MOTHER TERRA BE POISONED AND NOT SPEAK.
HAVE YOU SEEN THE LAKE BY KARTHA'S SMELTING PLANT? THE FISH KILLS? THE NEEDLESS HAVOC HAS BEGUN.
YOU SEE, THIS IS THE PROBLEM. YOUR DOGMA OF ABSOLUTES.
I DON'T WANT THE ENVIRONMENT RUINED, NOBODY DOES. EMERSON IS OUR HOME.
NEWCO
YOU SPEAK THE LANGUAGE, SISTER RACHEL, BUT YOU DO NOT LIVE THE LIFE.
IF YOU COULD ONLY HEAR THE RUMBLINGS OF AN AVALANCHE, AS DO I.
LEGATE MUIR, I DIDN'T--
BROTHER TOCH, YOU AND I FOR *THE REFUGE*.
FIRSTFATHER WILL WANT TO HEAR THE WORDS OF THE CONFERENCE.

"THEN WE'LL FOLLOW HIS INSTRUCTION."
KLEE RAN SWUNAY TSIK SAYD
ARL ENSAM WELDEE HADENCH
NEER ONDOO TICUM ENSY MIR
SHINSIYO VUHRHYD PROZI JORNAU.
SO HAS *FIRSTFATHER* TAUGHT ME.
LEGATE MUIR, I'M AFRAID.
I--I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS.

I HAVE FEAR AS WELL, BUT MY WORDS TO YOUR SISTER TODAY CUT MY OWN SPIRIT.
WE SHAKE OUR FISTS AND SHOUT, BUT WHAT DO WE *DO*? MUST WE SEE OUR FIRST SILENT SPRING BEFORE ACTING?
BUT WHY ME? WHY NOT ONE OF THE OTHERS?
THE OTHERS HAVE NOT SEEN WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN, DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW.
YOU ARE CHOSEN FOR THIS MOMENT. WILL YOU ACCEPT THE HONOR?
..IN..IN THE NAME OF *FIRST-FATHER*--
"I ACCEPT."

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY BROTHERS OJVIND AND WALD DIDN'T ROUSE US FOR BAKING DUTY.
MAYBE THE WOOD SUPPLY WAS DEPLETED.
AND THEY WENT OUT TO CHOP WOOD? AT MIDNIGHT? BETTER TO HAVE--
BROTHER, LOOK!

I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE ON A "MISSION," RURIK. WHEN YOU START SWINGIN' A CLUB AT PEOPLE, WE HAVE TO ARREST YOU.
A BROTHER HAS BEEN SLAIN!
WH-WHAT?
BACK AT THE REFUGE. A BRUTAL, HORRIBLE MURDER.
MURDER?!? MURDER? I CAN'T-- I MEAN, MAYBE A HUNGRY PLAINS WOLF...?
BEST YOU COME SEE FOR YOURSELF.
YEAH. *NEWCOMEN*, TAKE A COUPLE OF GRUNTS OUT TO THE REFUGE.
CAPTAIN, *I'VE* NEVER INVESTIGATED A MURDER SCENE BEFORE.
WELL, *SERGEANT*, THAT MAKES TWO OF US.

WE THINK IT'S BROTHER WALD. HE WAS TO HAVE ROUSED US TO RELIEVE HIM ON BAKING DUTY.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT'S A MURDER? THOSE LOOK AS IF THEY'D ALMOST HAVE TO BE CLAW MARKS.
BUT WE HEARD NO SCREAMS. NONE. AND BROTHER OJVIND IS MISSING. GONE WITHOUT A TRACE.
WELL, HE'S OUR FIRST SUSPECT THEN--I GUESS.
I'D LIKE SOMEONE TO CHECK ON MY BROTHER, TOCH, BUT FIRST, LET'S GO HAVE A WORD WITH LEGATE MUIR.
LEGATE MUIR IS IN COUNSEL WITH FIRSTFATHER.
HE MUST NOT BE DISTURBED.
PARDON ME?
LOOK, YOU WERE THE ONES WHO CAME SCREAMING MURDER!
SERGEANT NEWCOMEN! TURNER FOUND SOMETHING IN THE STEEPLE!

KILLL ME.. KILLLL ME.. KILLLLL ME..
...KILLLLL MEEEEEEEE

I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOUR DECISION TO EJECT ME MAY COST YOU MY PATRONAGE.
IF YOU SAY SO, CARL.
AH, GOOD EVENING, DEAR FRIEND.
YET AGAIN I FIND MYSELF IN THE AWKWARD POSITION OF HAVING TO ASK YOU TO FIND THE WAY HOME.
SPLOTCH

HE SAYS THE SAME THING EVERY NIGHT, DOESN'T HE?
OH, SURE, AND HE MIGHT EVEN MEAN IT EVERY TIME, BUT SINCE HE NEVER REMEMBERS A THING THE NEXT DAY--
EH?? OH, COME ON NOW, CARL. WE'RE CLOSED. NO MORE KIDDING AROUND.
OSBERT, LOOK!! HE'S BLEEDING!
HACK KOOF
CARL? YOU OKAY?
HHHH AAHH HHHgurggle!
OH, DEAR! FATHER!!!

GET HIM INSIDE! I'LL GET THE DOOR.
NOOOOOOO!
SPUT!
AHHH! AHHH! KINA!
PLEASE, PLEASE, DON'T LET GO. DON'T.
KINA, PLEASE.
THE BLOOD... I CAN'T... I...
P-P-PLEASE.
PLEASE.
SLWIPP!
KIIINAAAA

OS...OSBERT?
SSSSSSS
SSSSSSS
SLAM!
KOFF K-K-GGLE-GUH--

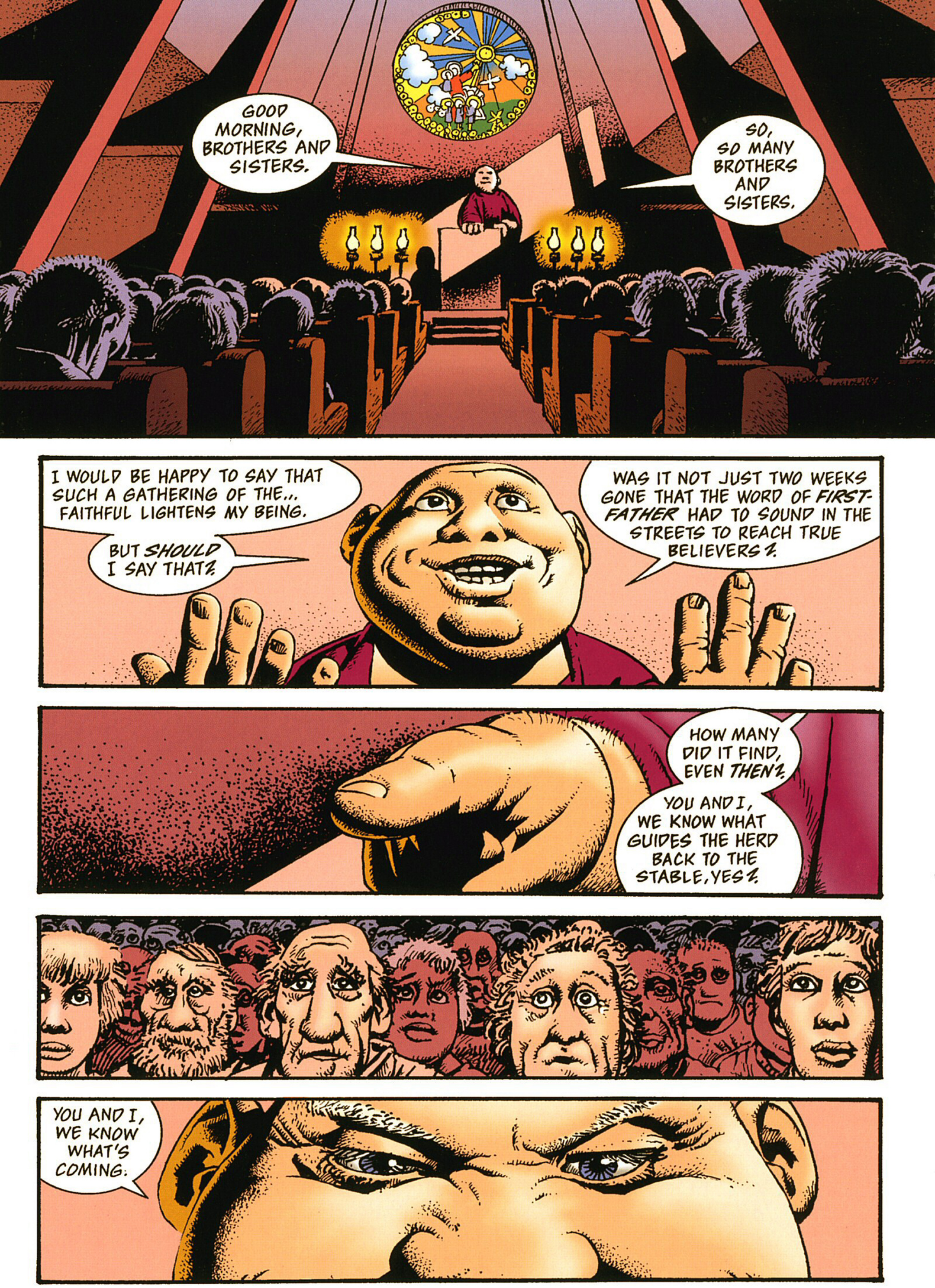
GUH-
GO..GO..
GO..
GO-KOFF-
SQUACH
KOFF
GURGGLE
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING
TO ME! THIS ISN'T
HAPPENING!
THIS ISN'T
HAPPENING!

CHASH!
GUH GUH GUH!!!
EEEEEEEE!!!

SISTER RACHEL, I UNDERSTAND YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO ME.
IT IS TIMES SUCH AS THIS THAT I FIND *HIS* COUNSEL MOST VALUABLE.
LEGATE MUIR, YOU'VE KEPT US WAITING FOR ALMOST AN HOUR. I'D LIKE TO SEE MORE COOPERATION FROM YOU ON THIS CASE.
SISTER, I TAKE EXCEPTION TO YOUR TONE--
MAYBE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS MATTER, LEGATE!
ONE MAN HAS BEEN KILLED INSIDE REFUGE WALLS, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ANOTHER.
FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO, DEAR SISTER, BUT IT IS *YOU* WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS MATTER.
YOU SEE, I HAVE JUST HAD WORDS WITH *FIRSTFATHER*, AND HE ASSURES ME--

"--THE DARK NIGHT OF EXTINCTION IS NEAR."

HHHAAALP!
HELP ME, SOMEBODY!
OH, FIRSTFATHER, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE...

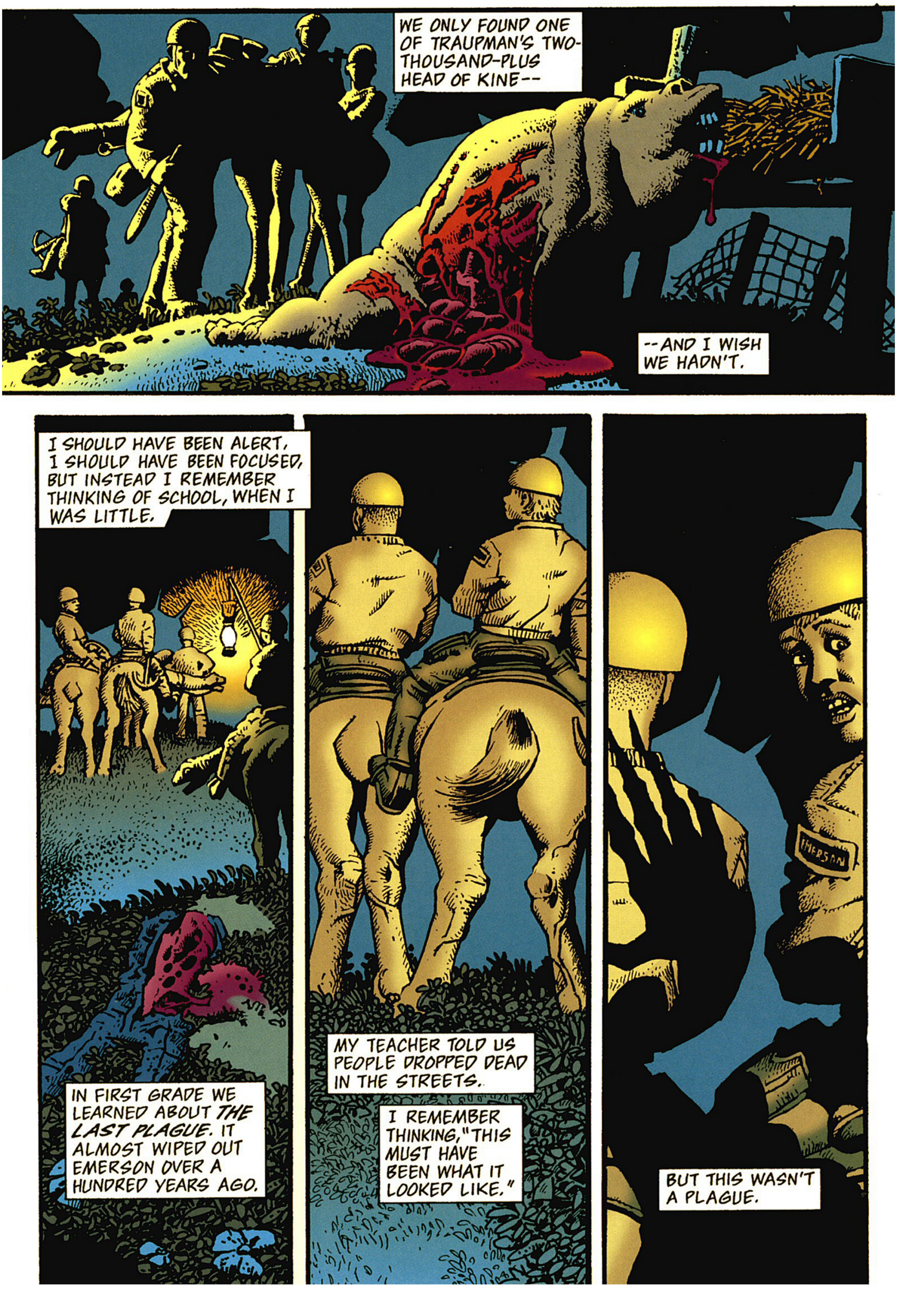

GOOD MORNING, BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
SO, SO MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
I WOULD BE HAPPY TO SAY THAT SUCH A GATHERING OF THE... FAITHFUL LIGHTENS MY BEING.
BUT *SHOULD* I SAY THAT?
WAS IT NOT JUST TWO WEEKS GONE THAT THE WORD OF *FIRST-FATHER* HAD TO SOUND IN THE STREETS TO REACH TRUE BELIEVERS?
HOW MANY DID IT FIND, EVEN *THEN*?
YOU AND I, WE KNOW WHAT GUIDES THE HERD BACK TO THE STABLE, YES?
YOU AND I, WE KNOW WHAT'S COMING.

YOU SEE PROPHECY BEING FULFILLED, YOU SENSE THE APPROACHING SHADOW, AND NOW, ONLY NOW, DO YOU SEEK REFUGE.
"DELIVER ME, FIRSTFATHER, DELIVER ME."
"I'LL ATTEND REFUGE EVERY SABBATH, IF YOU'LL ONLY SAVE ME."
THIS IS THE OFFERING YOU MAKE TO FIRST-FATHER?!
AN OATH BORN OF FEAR IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR SALVATION?!
CAN YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT IS SUFFICIENT?!

OF COURSE YOU CAN.
FOR YOU ARE HIS CHILDREN, AND WHEN CHILDREN ARE AFRAID, WHO WILL PROTECT THEM BUT *THEIR* FATHER?
BE NOT ASHAMED OF YOUR FEAR, FOR IT IS A *KIND* OF FAITH. A FAITH IN *THE* WORLD'S ABILITY TO DO YOU HARM.
FOR *FIRSTFATHER*, THAT IS ENOUGH.

THAT WAS THE DAY WE FOUND TRAUPMAN.
WHILE LEGATE MUIR WAS TELLING EVERY-BODY ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD--
--CAPTAIN PRICE AND I WERE WATCHING IT.
TWELVE MURDERS IN SEVEN DAYS, MORE THAN EMERSON'S HAD IN A DECADE.
NO, I THINK THAT WAS THE SIXTH DAY. I'M NOT SURE.
BUT ANYWAY, THAT WAS THE DAY WE FOUND TRAUPMAN.
ALTHOUGH IF WE HADN'T FOUND HIS IDENTIFICATION PAPERS... NEVER MIND.
RIGHT AWAY WE THOUGHT OF TRAUPMAN'S RANCH, HIS FAMILY, HIS HIRED HANDS.

WITH FIVE OTHER SECURITY OFFICERS, THE CAPTAIN AND I RODE OUT THERE.
KNOWING WE COULDN'T GET THERE BEFORE NIGHTFALL, WE WANTED TO BE SURE WE WERE PREPARED FOR THE WORST.
THAT'S WHAT WE GOT.

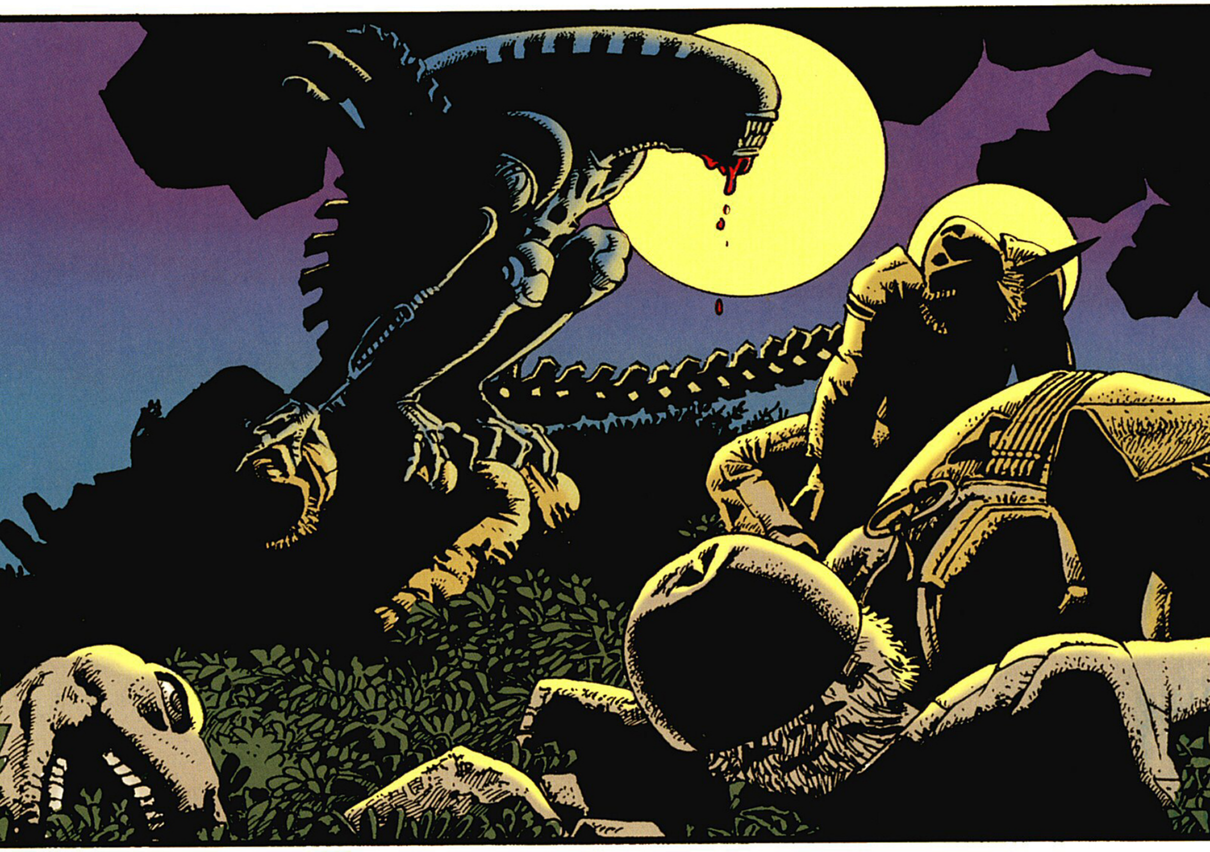

WE ONLY FOUND ONE OF TRAUPMAN'S TWO-THOUSAND-PLUS HEAD OF KINE--
--AND I WISH WE HADN'T.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALERT, I SHOULD HAVE BEEN FOCUSED, BUT INSTEAD I REMEMBER THINKING OF SCHOOL, WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
IN FIRST GRADE WE LEARNED ABOUT *THE LAST PLAGUE*. IT ALMOST WIPED OUT EMERSON OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
MY TEACHER TOLD US PEOPLE DROPPED DEAD IN THE STREETS.
I REMEMBER THINKING, "THIS MUST HAVE BEEN WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE."
EMERSON
BUT THIS WASN'T A PLAGUE.

SEVEN ARMED OFFICERS, SEVEN OF US, AND IT ATTACKED ANYWAY.

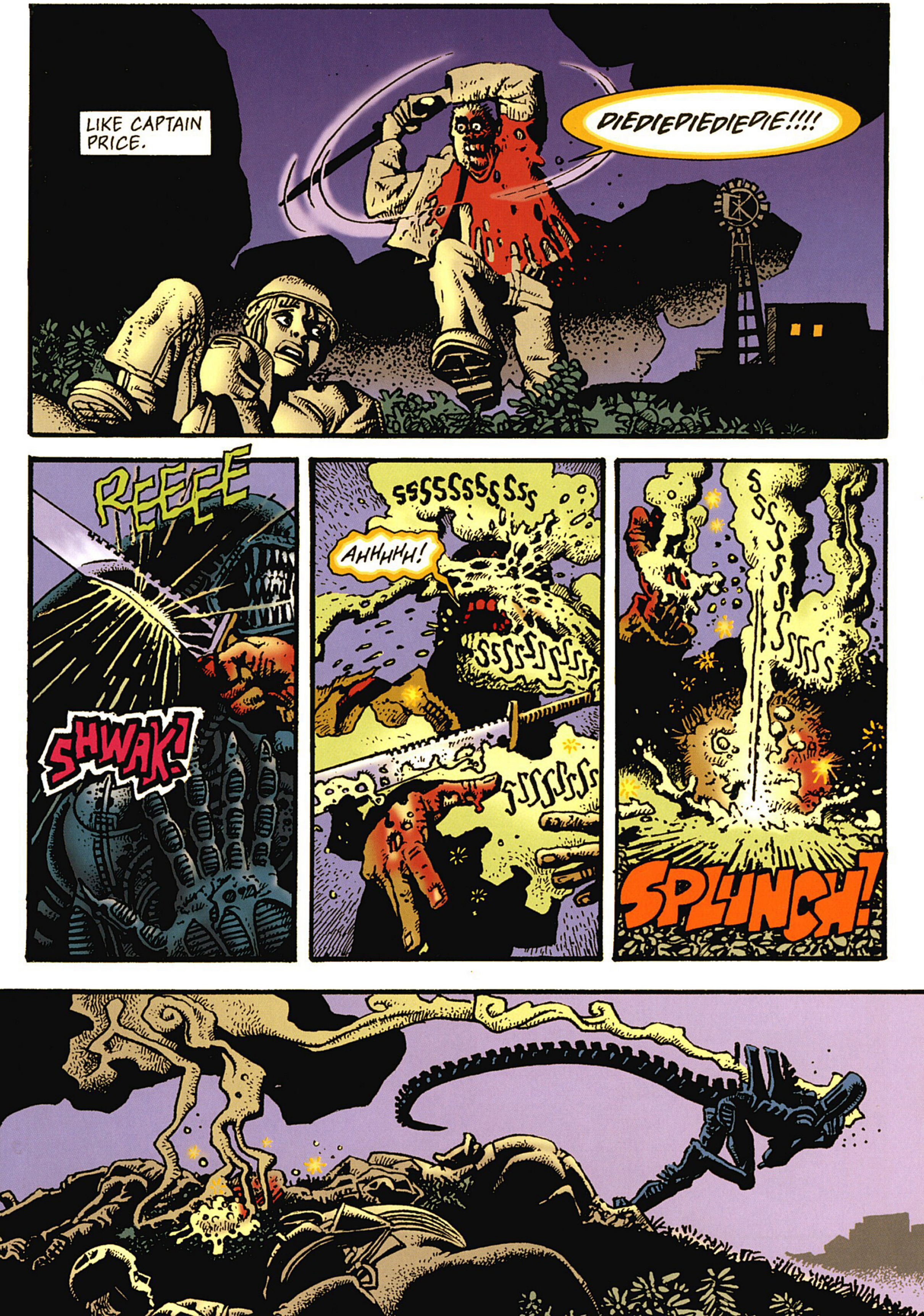
"WELL, THAT'S GOOD." I LIED TO MYSELF, "IT'S TOO STUPID TO BE AFRAID. WE CAN SEE IT, AND WE CAN KILL IT.
"WE CAN END THIS NIGHTMARE HERE, NOW."
REEEEE
THP
THP
THP
BUT OUR SHAFTS, THEY JUST... JUST MELTED.
HHHHHHHHHHHHH

CAPTAIN PRICE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO RE-ARM.
PRICE
OFFICER INGA, SHE WAS FASTER, SHE WAS READY.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN WHAT SHE THOUGHT, BUT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT--
THWOMP!

FOR A FEW SECONDS, OR MAYBE IT WAS LONGER, I BLACKED OUT.
WHEN MY HEAD CLEARED--



AND I WAS JUST A SITTING DUCK. NOBODY LIVES FOREVER, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE THAT WAY.
I WANTED TO GO DOWN FIGHTING, LIKE A WARRIOR, LIKE A HERO.


LIKE CAPTAIN PRICE.
DIEDIEDIEDIEDIE!!!!
REEEEE
SHWAK!
SSSSSSSSSSS
AHHHHH!
SSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSSS
SPLUNCH!

IT WAS MORNING BEFORE ANYONE FOUND ME.
WHEN I STOPPED BEING SCARED, I STARTED TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAD SAVED MY LIFE.
HERE, AS I'M TELLING YOU THIS, THE ANSWER PROBABLY SOUNDS CRAZY.
BUT OUT THERE, IN THE DARK, IT WHISPERED ITSELF INTO MY EAR.
"DEATH."
AND IT'S TRUE. MY MOUNT, DEAD, PINNING ME TO THE EARTH, KEEPING FROM FIGHTING A HOPELESS BATTLE--
--AND A TWICE-KILLED POLICE CAPTAIN, THE ONLY ONE OF US WHO COULD HAVE SCARED THAT MONSTER OFF.
BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE THAT'S THE SORT OF THING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT.

SPEAK ON, SISTER.
SPEAK YOUR MIND. EASE YOUR HEART.
NOW, YOU'RE SURE THIS WASN'T A PLAINS WOLF, SERGEANT NEWCOMEN? OR MAYBE A WHOLE PACK?
WITH *ACID* FLOWING FROM ITS WOUNDS, SISTER HITRESE?
WE ALL SAW WHAT WAS LEFT OF CAPTAIN PRICE. YOU QUESTION UNWISELY.
AND *YOU'RE* TALKING OUT OF TURN, LEGATE.
WHEN I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
ANYWAY, THESE AREN'T THE "LAST DAYS."
AND JUST BECAUSE WE'VE NEVER SEEN THIS THING DOESN'T MEAN IT'S SOME SUPERNATURAL FIEND.
A MUTATION, MAYBE, BUT NOT A DEMON.
MUTATION?

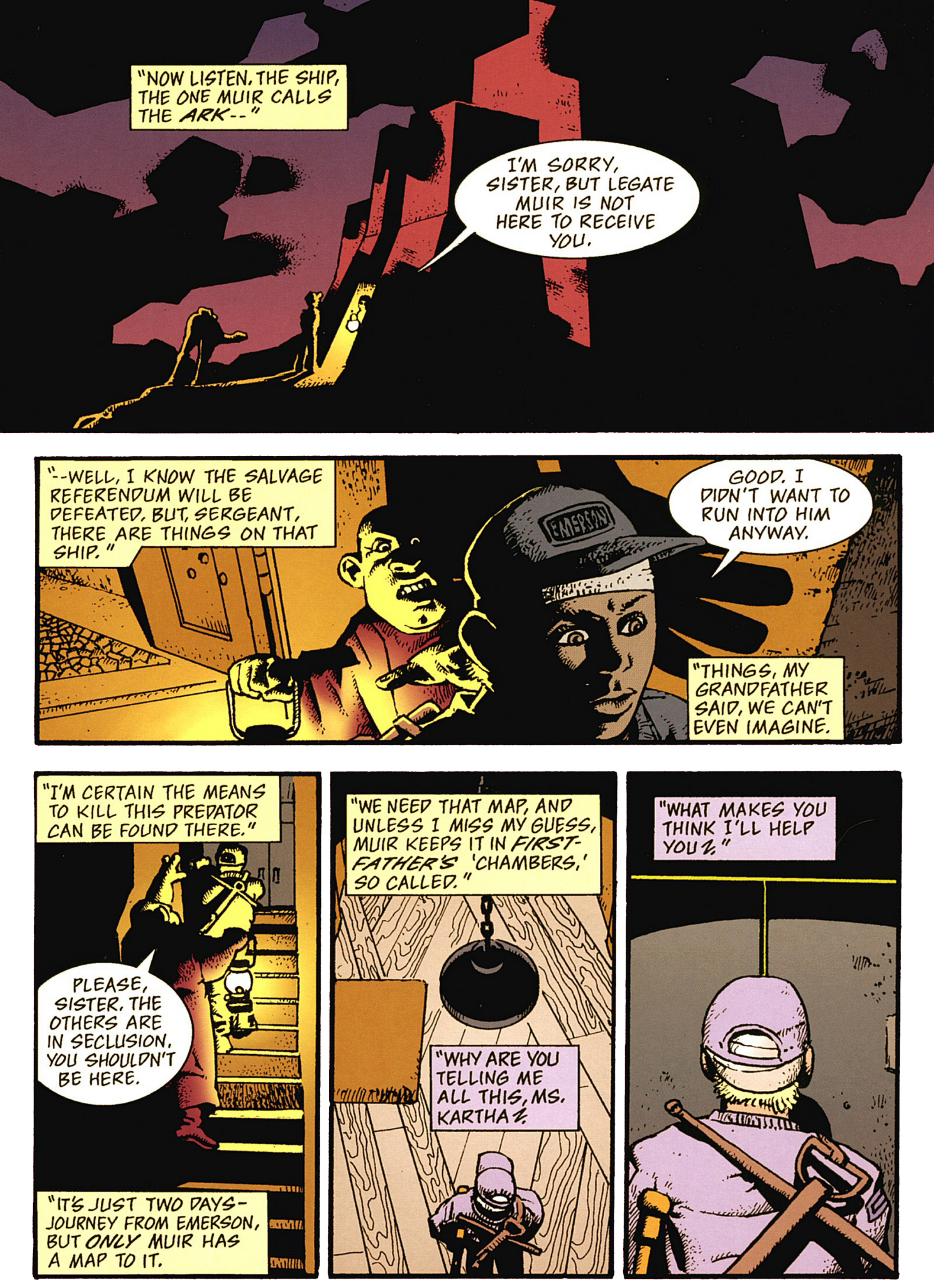
MUTATED BY *WHAT*, SISTER HITRESE?
BY THE TOXINS EACH RAINFALL LEACHES FROM THE TAILINGS AT YOUR IRON MINE AND DRAINS INTO OUR DRINKING WATER?
OR MUTATED, PERHAPS, BY THE STRANGLING SMOKE YOUR SMELTERS AND POWER PLANTS PUMP INTO THE AIR?
AND IF WE ARE SEEING *ONE* MUTATION, SHOULDN'T WE EXPECT MANY MORE?
NO SPECTERS, SISTER. NO DEMONS.
NATURE FIGHTS BACK--*THIS* WE HAVE BEEN TOLD.
YOU KNOW, LEGATE, FOR A MAN CONVINCED THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO END, YOU SEEM PRETTY DAMN HAPPY.

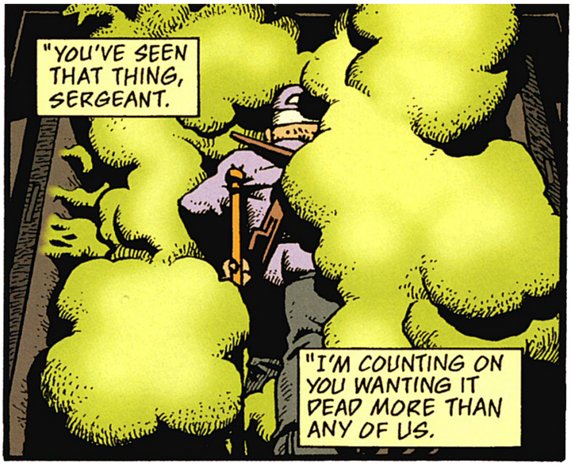
I HAVE ALWAYS FOLLOWED *FIRSTFATHER'S* TEACHINGS.
I, AND ALL WHO ACCEPT HIM INTO THEIR LIVES, HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE WIDENING WAVE OF DEATH.
BUT *YOU*...
YOU HAVE NO HUMILITY BEFORE THE VAST FORCES WITH WHICH YOU TAMPER.
I KNOW, I KNOW. SO, I'M DOOMED, RIGHT?
WELL, THE REST OF US WILL BE TOO IF WE DON'T ASSEMBLE A SEARCH-AND-SALVAGE TEAM IMMEDIATELY.
THERE ARE RISKS IN SUCH AN OPERATION.
WHAT ABOUT THE RISKS IF WE *DON'T* DO IT, MAYOR?
ALL OF YOU KNOW THAT WE COULD VERY WELL FIND A WEAPON OUT THERE STRONG ENOUGH TO KILL THIS CREATURE.
SISTER, SISTER, CALM YOURSELF.
AFTER ALL, THIS TROUBLE SHALL WORK ITSELF OUT TOMORROW, WHEN THE SALVAGE REFERENDUM COMES UP FOR A VOTE.

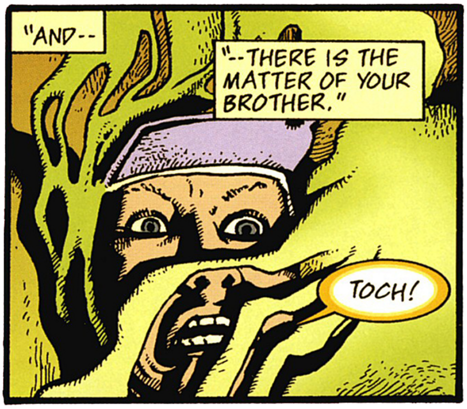
RIGHT! NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THIS CITY ALL SCARED SPITLESS WITH YOUR END-OF-THE-WORLD TALK AND YOUR MONSTER, NOW YOU'LL LET THEM VOTE.
I? I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?
YOU TEST MY SERENITY, SISTER.
I WILL NOT STAY FOR SUCH WORDS.
LEGATE, WAIT!
MY BROTHER, TOCH NEWCOMEN. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR WEEKS.
IS HE ALL RIGHT? CAN I TALK TO HIM?
HE IS IN SECLUSION AT THE REFUGE, PRAYING IN PREPARATION FOR THE EXTINCTION.
FIRSTFATHER WATCHES OVER HIM, SISTER RACHEL. WORRY NOT.
HAVE FAITH.

"HAVE FAITH."
THAT'S HIS ANSWER TO ALL OUR PROBLEMS.
IT MAKES THINGS SEEM A LOT SIMPLER, I SUPPOSE.
THING IS, THE PROBLEMS NEVER GET SOLVED, DO THEY?
MS. KARTHA, I'M NOT SURE WHY YOU ASKED ME OUT HERE.
WELL, SERGEANT NEWCOMEN, FOR ONE THING, YOU'RE THE RANKING LAW OFFICER IN EMERSON NOW.
LIKE IT OR NOT, THAT MAKES YOU VERY IMPORTANT.
AND FOR ANOTHER, I SAW YOUR FACE THIS MORNING WHEN YOU ASKED ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, AND I KNOW--
--YOU DON'T HAVE FAITH.

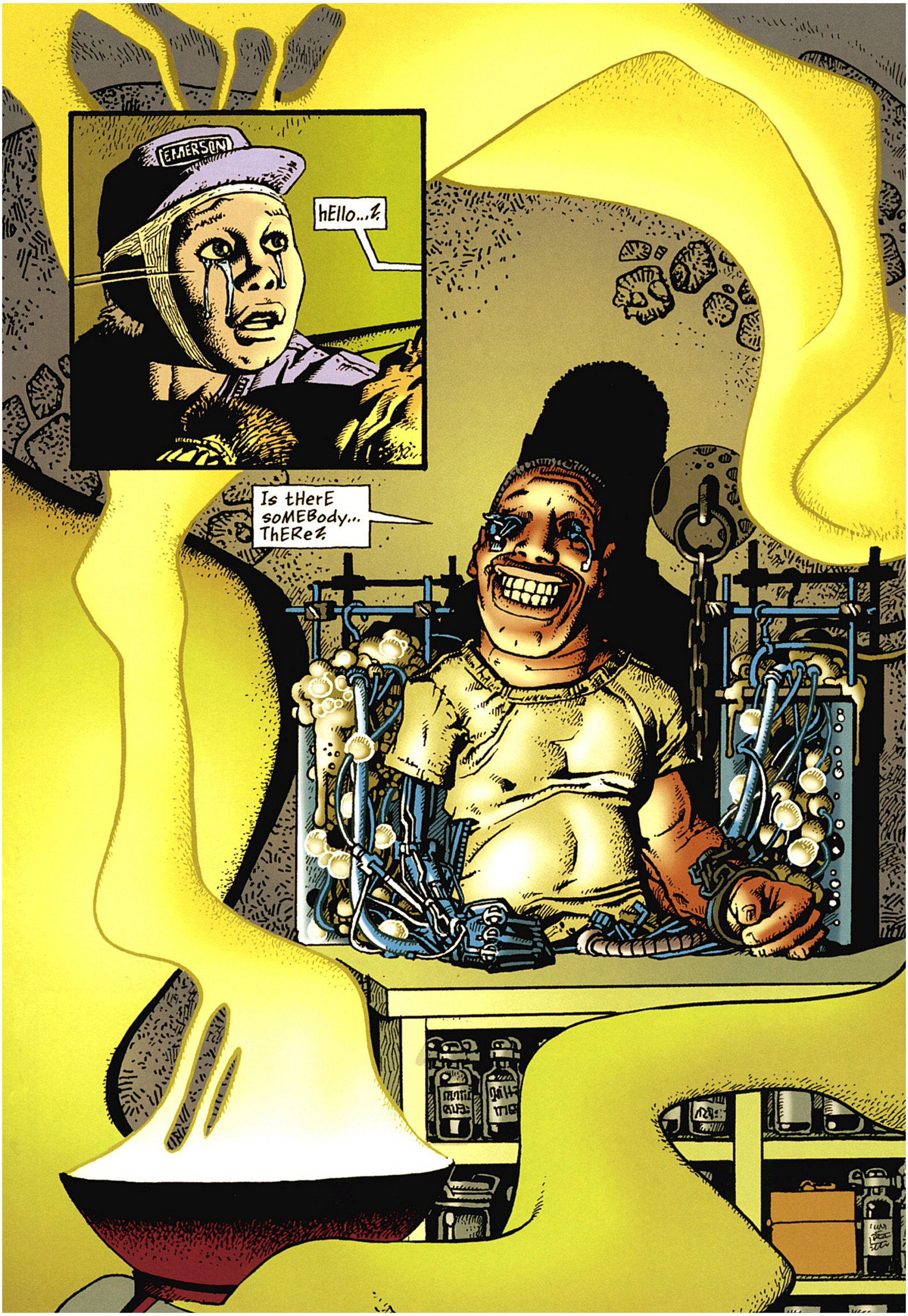
AND YOU SHOULDN'T. I KNEW CARSON MUIR WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.
I SAW SOME OF THE THINGS HE DID.
I HEARD ABOUT THE OTHERS.
ALL HIS HOLY TALK JUST DOESN'T RING TRUE FOR ME-- OR YOU, I THINK.
I CAN'T SAY HE'S MY FAVORITE PERSON, BUT HE MADE SOME POINTS TODAY I FOUND DIFFICULT TO IGNORE.
SERGEANT, SEVENTY YEARS AGO MY GRANDFATHER STARTED MINING AND SMELTING ORE.
BACK THEN, A LOT OF PEOPLE DIDN'T LIKE THE SOUNDS OF THAT EITHER--UNTIL THEY STARTED USING STEEL PLOW SHARES AND THRESHERS.
WHAT I'M SAYING IS, I LIVE IN EMERSON, TOO. SO DO MY CHILDREN.
I WANT TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THIS CITY, AND THAT'S WHY I WANT THIS CREATURE DESTROYED.

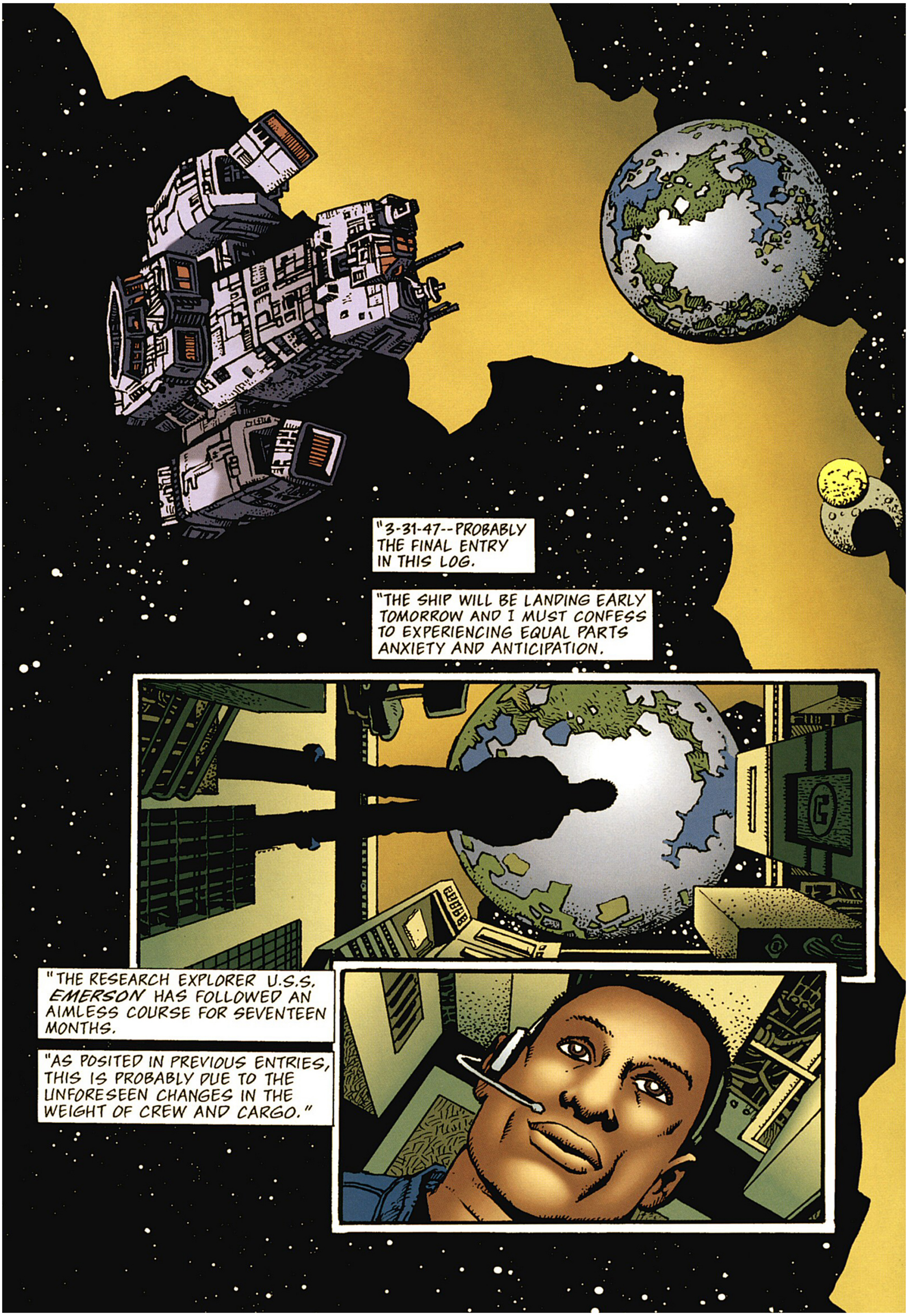

"NOW LISTEN. THE SHIP, THE ONE MUIR CALLS THE *ARK*--"
I'M SORRY, SISTER, BUT LEGATE MUIR IS NOT HERE TO RECEIVE YOU.
"--WELL, I KNOW THE SALVAGE REFERENDUM WILL BE DEFEATED. BUT, SERGEANT, THERE ARE THINGS ON THAT SHIP."
EMERSON
GOOD. I DIDN'T WANT TO RUN INTO HIM ANYWAY.
"THINGS, MY GRANDFATHER SAID, WE CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE.
"I'M CERTAIN THE MEANS TO KILL THIS PREDATOR CAN BE FOUND THERE."
PLEASE, SISTER. THE OTHERS ARE IN SECLUSION. YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
"IT'S JUST TWO DAYS-JOURNEY FROM EMERSON, BUT *ONLY* MUIR HAS A MAP TO IT.
"WE NEED THAT MAP, AND UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, MUIR KEEPS IT IN *FIRST-FATHER'S* 'CHAMBERS,' SO CALLED."
"WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME ALL THIS, MS. KARTHA?
"WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'LL HELP YOU?"

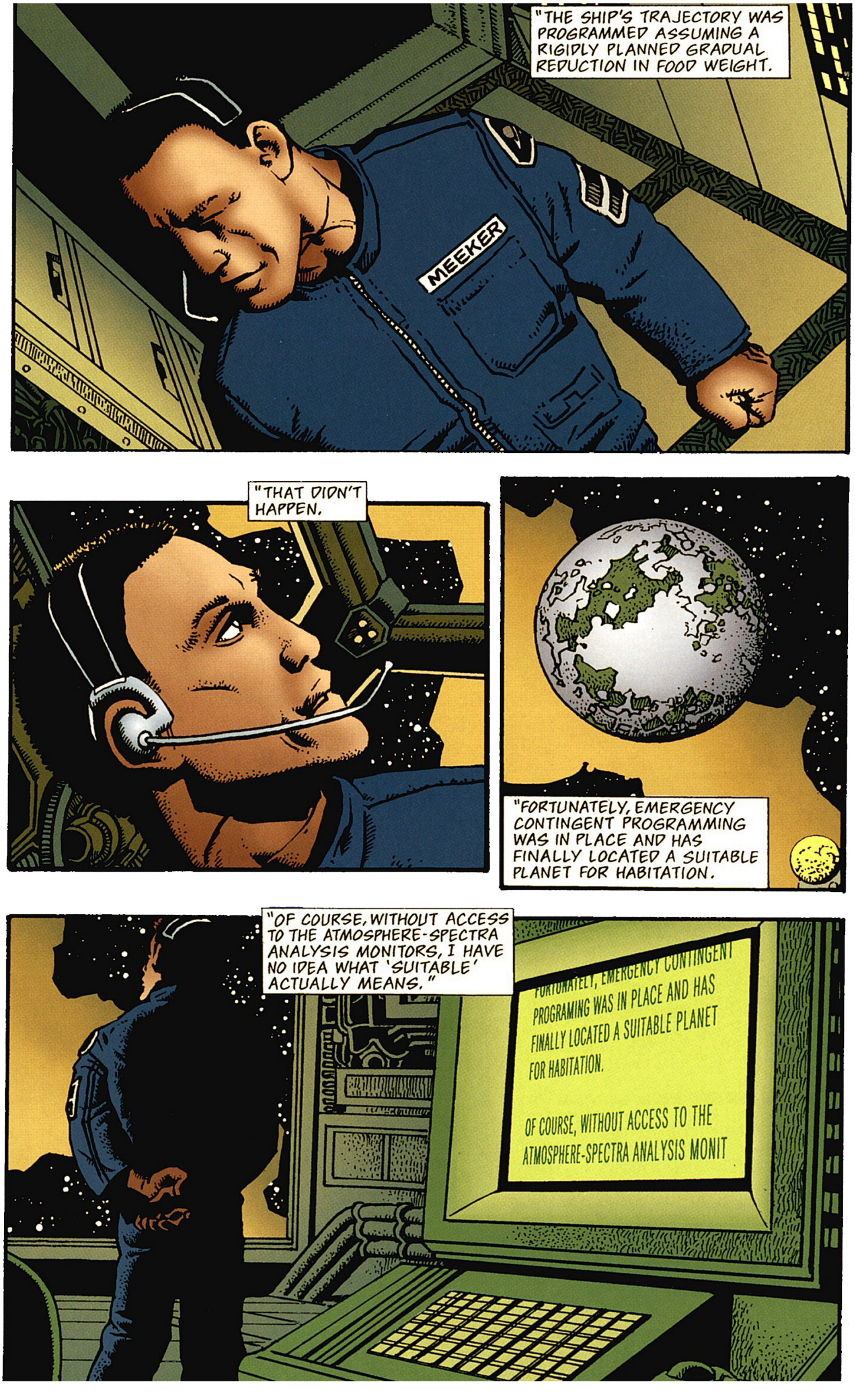

"YOU'VE SEEN THAT THING, SERGEANT.
"I'M COUNTING ON YOU WANTING IT DEAD MORE THAN ANY OF US.


"AND--
"--THERE IS THE MATTER OF YOUR BROTHER."
TOCH!

NO, NO, NO! NOT MY LITTLE BROTHER--
TOCH, WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOUZ!


EMERSON
hEllo...?
Is tHerE soMEBody... ThERe?

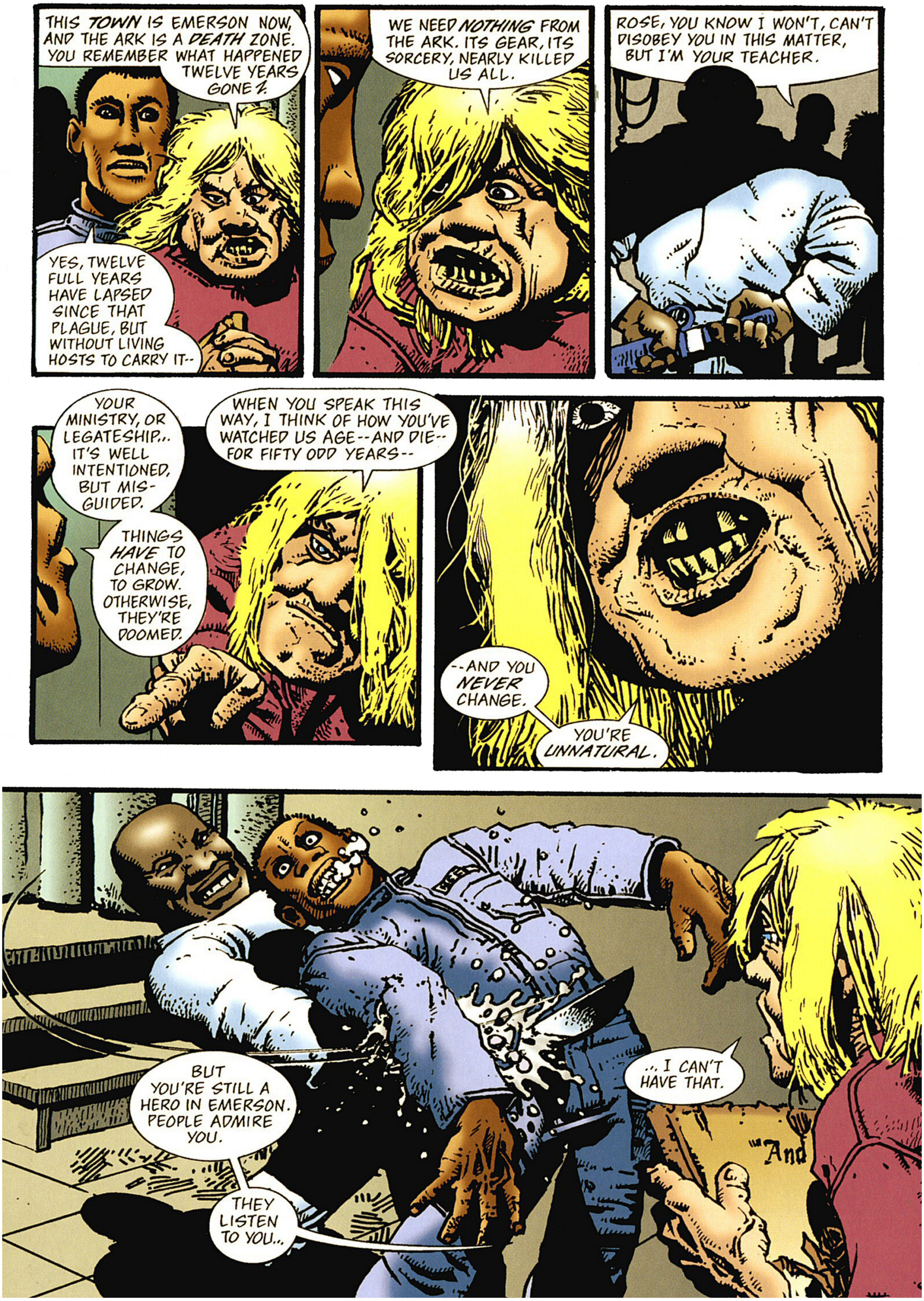

"3-31-47--PROBABLY THE FINAL ENTRY IN THIS LOG.
"THE SHIP WILL BE LANDING EARLY TOMORROW AND I MUST CONFESS TO EXPERIENCING EQUAL PARTS ANXIETY AND ANTICIPATION.
"THE RESEARCH EXPLORER U.S.S. *EMERSON* HAS FOLLOWED AN AIMLESS COURSE FOR SEVENTEEN MONTHS.
"AS POSITED IN PREVIOUS ENTRIES, THIS IS PROBABLY DUE TO THE UNFORESEEN CHANGES IN THE WEIGHT OF CREW AND CARGO."


"THE SHIP'S TRAJECTORY WAS PROGRAMMED ASSUMING A RIGIDLY PLANNED GRADUAL REDUCTION IN FOOD WEIGHT.
MEEKER
"THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN.
"FORTUNATELY, EMERGENCY CONTINGENT PROGRAMMING WAS IN PLACE AND HAS FINALLY LOCATED A SUITABLE PLANET FOR HABITATION.
"OF COURSE, WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE ATMOSPHERE-SPECTRA ANALYSIS MONITORS, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT 'SUITABLE' ACTUALLY MEANS."
PROGRAMING WAS IN PLACE AND HAS
FINALLY LOCATED A SUITABLE PLANET
FOR HABITATION.
OF COURSE, WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE
ATMOSPHERE-SPECTRA ANALYSIS MONIT

"SUCH ACCESS IS, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, IMPOSSIBLE.
"I AM NO CLOSER TO KNOWING HOW THE CONTAGION FROM THE VIRILE RESEARCH CENTER WAS INTRODUCED TO THE SHIP'S GENERAL POPULATION.
"SEE ENTRIES 10-19-45 THROUGH 11-5-45 FOR ALL ESTABLISHED DETAILS.
"WHAT IS CERTAIN, MORE THAN A YEAR LATER--
"--IS THAT THERE ARE NO ADULT SURVIVORS."
IF NOT FOR THIS CENTER'S STANDARD QUARANTINE--
DADDY 2.

WHAT IS IT, ROSE? WHAT'S WRONG?
I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE WERE GOING HOME.
BUT WE ARE, PRINCESS. TOMORROW MORNING WE'RE GOING HOME.
WE'RE ALL GOING HOME.
THEN WE CAN THROW AWAY THIS BOOK? IT'S BORING.
OH, NO, DEAR. THE BOOKS ON DISC WON'T WORK IN OUR NEW HOME. THAT'S GOING TO BE A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT TOOL FOR TEACHING THE YOUNGER ONES.
SO DON'T YOU EVER LET GO OF THAT BOOK.
"And No Birds Sing"
Phoebe McMahon

THIS KNOWLEDGE IS ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN US AND THE DARK NIGHT OF EXTINCTION.
"And No Birds Sing"
Phoebe McMahon
IT, AND WE WHO TREMBLE BEFORE IT.
LET NOT A CHAIN OF DEVASTATION LINK US TO OUR POISON PAST.
TREAD LIGHTLY ON THIS EARTH, CITIZENS. ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT DEFILEMENT.
GO IN PURITY.
FINE DEMAGOGUERY, ROSE, AS USUAL.
I CALLED YOU HERE, FATHER, TO TALK, BUT I WON'T STAND FOR YOUR CRITICISM.
I SEE. EVERYTHING ON YOUR TERMS. I GUESS YOU'RE JUST TOO OLD TO GROW UP.
LOOK, I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU I SPOTTED ANIMALS NESTING IN AND AROUND THE WRECK OF THE EMERSON.
THE VIRUS MUST BE DEAD. THE GEAR ON THE SHIP IS DURABLE, AND WE SHOULD SALVAGE IT. WHAT'S THERE TO "TALK" ABOUT?!

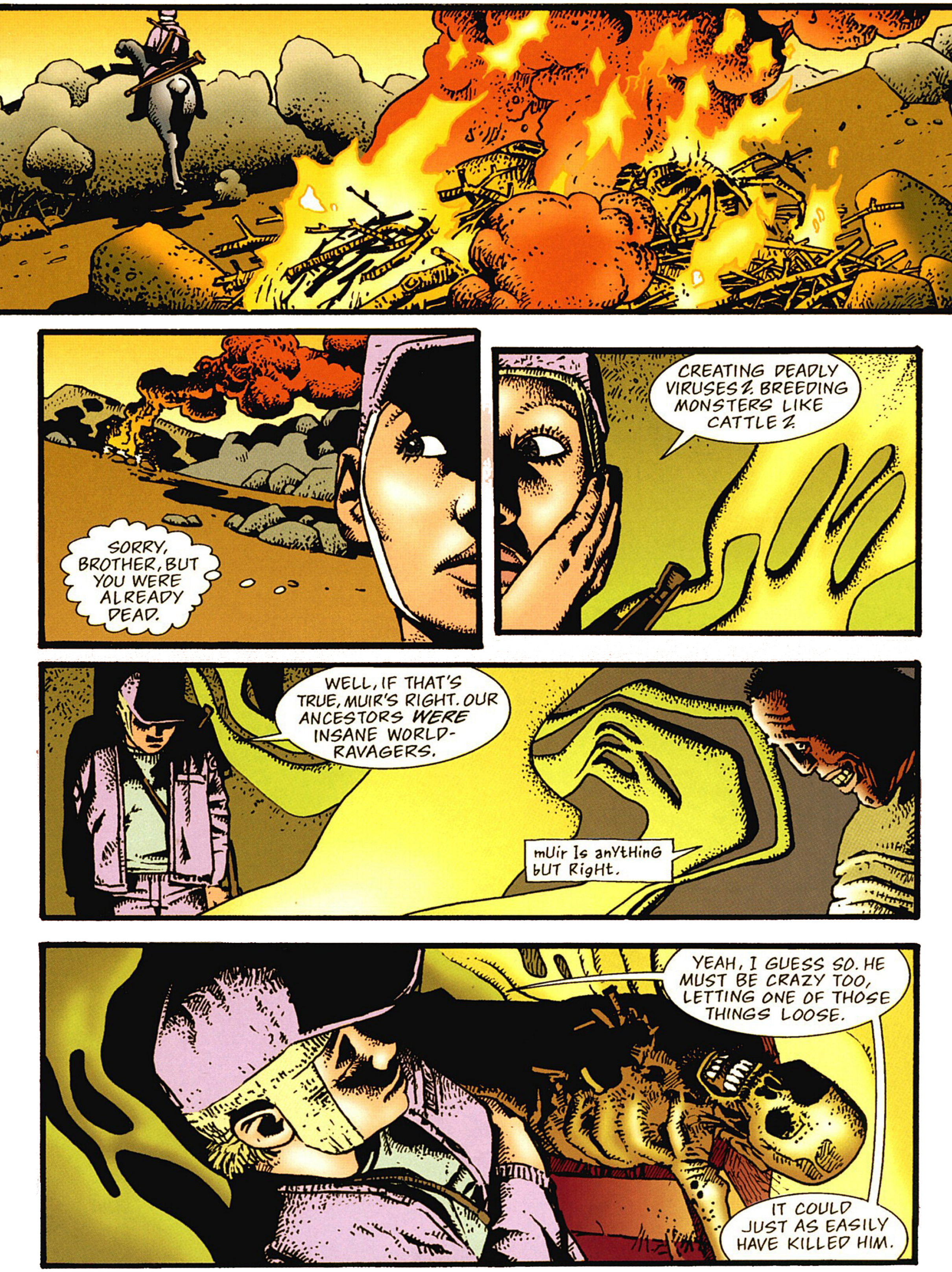

THIS TOWN IS EMERSON NOW, AND THE ARK IS A DEATH ZONE. YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TWELVE YEARS GONE?
YES, TWELVE FULL YEARS HAVE LAPSED SINCE THAT PLAGUE, BUT WITHOUT LIVING HOSTS TO CARRY IT--
WE NEED NOTHING FROM THE ARK. ITS GEAR, ITS SORCERY, NEARLY KILLED US ALL.
ROSE, YOU KNOW I WON'T, CAN'T DISOBEY YOU IN THIS MATTER, BUT I'M YOUR TEACHER.
YOUR MINISTRY, OR LEGATESHIP... IT'S WELL INTENTIONED, BUT MIS-GUIDED.
THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE, TO GROW. OTHERWISE, THEY'RE DOOMED.
WHEN YOU SPEAK THIS WAY, I THINK OF HOW YOU'VE WATCHED US AGE--AND DIE--FOR FIFTY ODD YEARS--
--AND YOU NEVER CHANGE.
YOU'RE UNNATURAL.
BUT YOU'RE STILL A HERO IN EMERSON. PEOPLE ADMIRE YOU.
THEY LISTEN TO YOU...
...I CAN'T HAVE THAT.
And

BUT THAT WOULD HAVE KILLED ANYONE, AND IT WAS OVER A HUNDRED..
HOW CAN YOU STILL BE LIVING?
sYNThetIc, a SyNtHETiC, like A mAchINe... U WOUlDN'T uNDEr-stAnd, bUT i Was nOt EVer aLiVe.
AnD noW DON'T eVEN FuncTion 2 wEll, nOT 222 WelL.
I KNEW THE LEGATESHIP'S VERSION OF HOW WE CAME HERE COULDN'T BE ALL TRUE-- BUT FIRSTFATHER, A BABY SITTER?
synTHetIC cHilDCaRE sUperVIsoR, 4 ArOunD thE cLocK e... E fiSh...
eYe... I caN't ReMEmbEr tHaT WOrd.

AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES--
NOT hOly. juST a bOok... i Was reADinG wHeN tHE vIRuS sTrUCK.
a rEpriNT oF 20tH SenT... cEnTUry N... EnVy... EChO lOgiCal WaRninG.
NevEr lIkEd cYBeR tExtS, liked 2 fEEl wB Of pApeR bOOk iN mY hand.
rOse LiKED thE wEIghT... too.
anD i WaSHed... wAtCHeD eAch nEW leg8 grOomEd.
EaCh NEW geNeRaTIoN, FInd bOY oR GIrl, fInD BuLLy. New LegAtE. keEp tHe PoWer. KEep thE cOntroL.
HERE YOU ARE-- WHATEVER YOU ARE-- RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, BUT HOW? HOW CAN I BELIEVE YOU?
HOW COULD THEY KEEP YOU ALIVE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS? AND WHY?
beCauSE oF wHat i No... knOw aBOut tHe crEatUres.

LEGATE, BROTHER HUEPER IS STARTING TO SQUIRM AND MOAN--
--JUST AS BROTHER TOCH DID DIRECTLY BEFORE *THAT* BIRTH.
THE EMBRACE HAS NOT YET RELAXED, BROTHER THERMAN. WE'VE NO RUSH.
THUK

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE SAFEST SHELTER, LEGATE?
I KNOW WHAT I AM ABOUT.
I-I BEG YOU, LEGATE, RECONSIDER.
CLEARLY YOU'VE NO FAITH IN ME, BROTHER WINGE.
BUT HAVE FAITH IN FIRST-FATHER.
"HE WILL PROTECT US ALL."

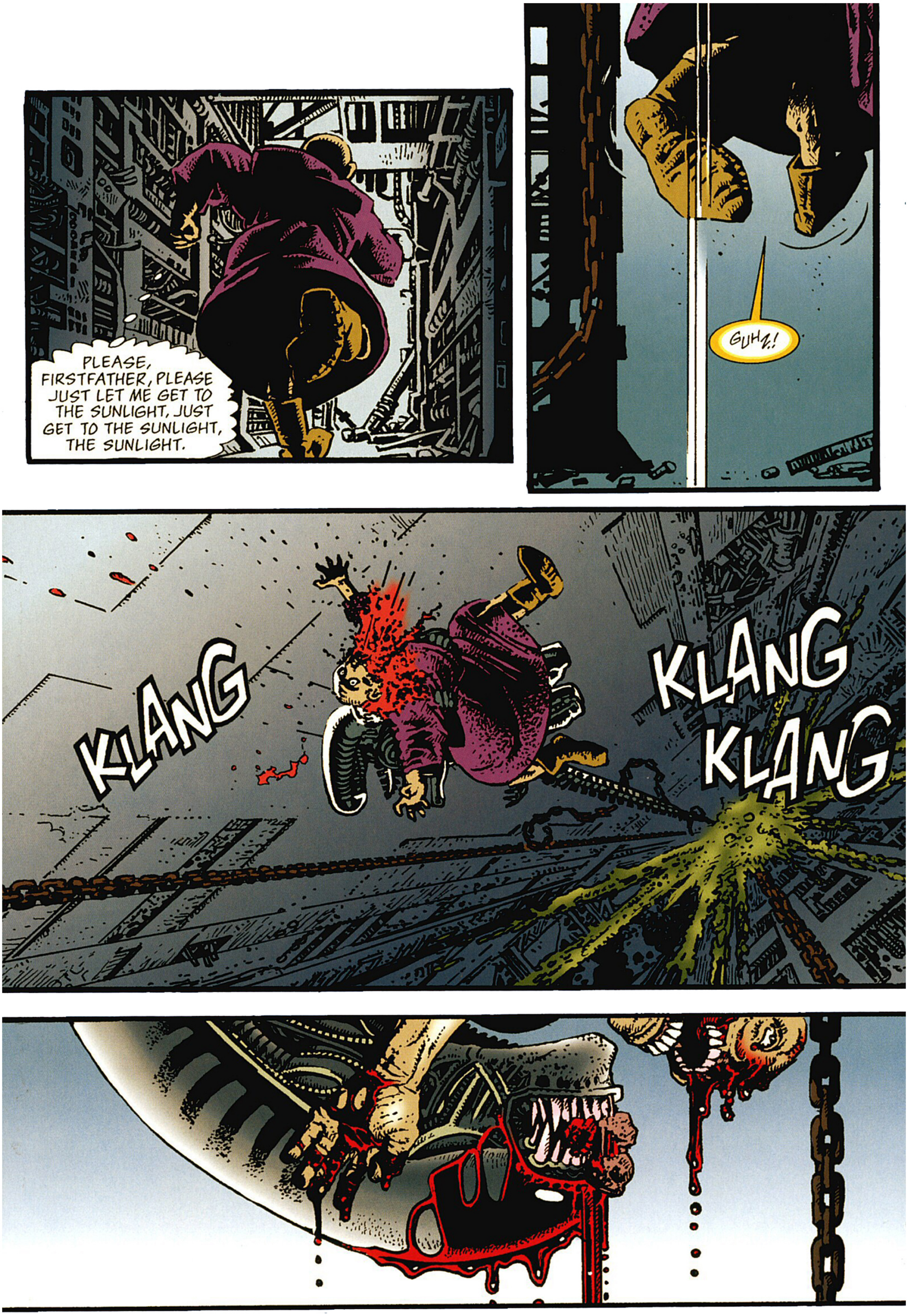

SORRY, BROTHER, BUT YOU WERE ALREADY DEAD.
CREATING DEADLY VIRUSES? BREEDING MONSTERS LIKE CATTLE?
WELL, IF THAT'S TRUE, MUIR'S RIGHT. OUR ANCESTORS *WERE* INSANE WORLD-RAVAGERS.
mUir Is anYtHing bUT RigHt.
YEAH, I GUESS SO. HE MUST BE CRAZY TOO, LETTING ONE OF THOSE THINGS LOOSE.
IT COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE KILLED HIM.

ThEre aRe SafEguArds onE cAn TAke, eLEmenTS oN ThIs pLaneT's SurFace ThaT, cOMbINEd, mImiC tHe cREAtuRe's oWn fAir FaRe... sMElls.
mAsK's hUMan sMeLls sOmeWhat, pRotEctS oNe... SomEwhAt.
mOst eFfeCtIve wHeN bURnEd as IncEnsE.
OH MY--! YOU'RE SAYING YOU HELPED MUIR MAKE THIS STUFF?
NoT mUir. mANy, MaNY yEarS agO, tHe fIrST tIMe lEgBs uSed CrEatuRe. didN'T wAnT 2--
--bUT WaS... aM In nO POsitiON 2 rEsisT tHem.
THE FIRST TIME? I CAN'T-- THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A HUNDRED YEARS?
IT'S TOO MUCH, TOO--I CAN'T BELIEVE ALL THIS. GOT TO THINK--SIT DOWN AND THINK ABOUT THIS.
NO TIME!!!

tHE CreAtUres lIve aND KiLl 2 seRvE a qUEen--
jUst LiSten! wItHouT QueEn's gUiDance, tHEY--iT sTOps HUnting, rETuRns 2 wHat iT ThiNks is neSt--anD tHAt'S WhEre MuIR weNt--2 gET neW cReaTUrE...sO U lIStEn.
A QUEENZZ!
"i sHalI TelL U hOw 2 gET 2 Ship--
"--ANd wHEre WeaPOn loCkEr iS--HoW tHey WorK--sOme WILL sTiLL wORK.
"i ShAIl tElI U hOw to gET iNTo eGg sTOrAge UNiT.
"aND I shaLL TeLl u aBOUt ONe OtHEr tHinG."
EMERSON

KLANG KLANG KLANG
CLEARANCE ONE-EIGHT-SIX-EIGHT. ARLEN, SAMUEL D., HEAD ENGINEER ON DUTY.
COMMENCE EMERGENCY OVERRIDE PROCEDURE NOW.
SAM, WHO-EVER YOU WERE, I HOPE THIS STILL WORKS.
KLANG KLANG KLANG
IT'S TRUE, IT'S ALL TRUE. EVERYTHING HE SAID. AND THERE ARE STILL NINE MORE OF THESE THINGS.
NO. NINE LESS.

IT'S GETTING CLOSER, LEGATE.
SHHHHH.
SERENITY, BROTHER WINGE. SERENITY.
BWHOOM
FIRSTFATHER OF TERRA! HOW CAN YOU ALL JUST SIT THERE ?!!
IF WE STAY, WE'LL DIE!
BROTHER WINGE--
PEACE, BROTHER THERMAN. LET HIM BE.
"THIS IS NO PLACE FOR THE FAITHLESS."


PLEASE, FIRSTFATHER, PLEASE JUST LET ME GET TO THE SUNLIGHT, JUST GET TO THE SUNLIGHT, THE SUNLIGHT.
GUHZ!
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG

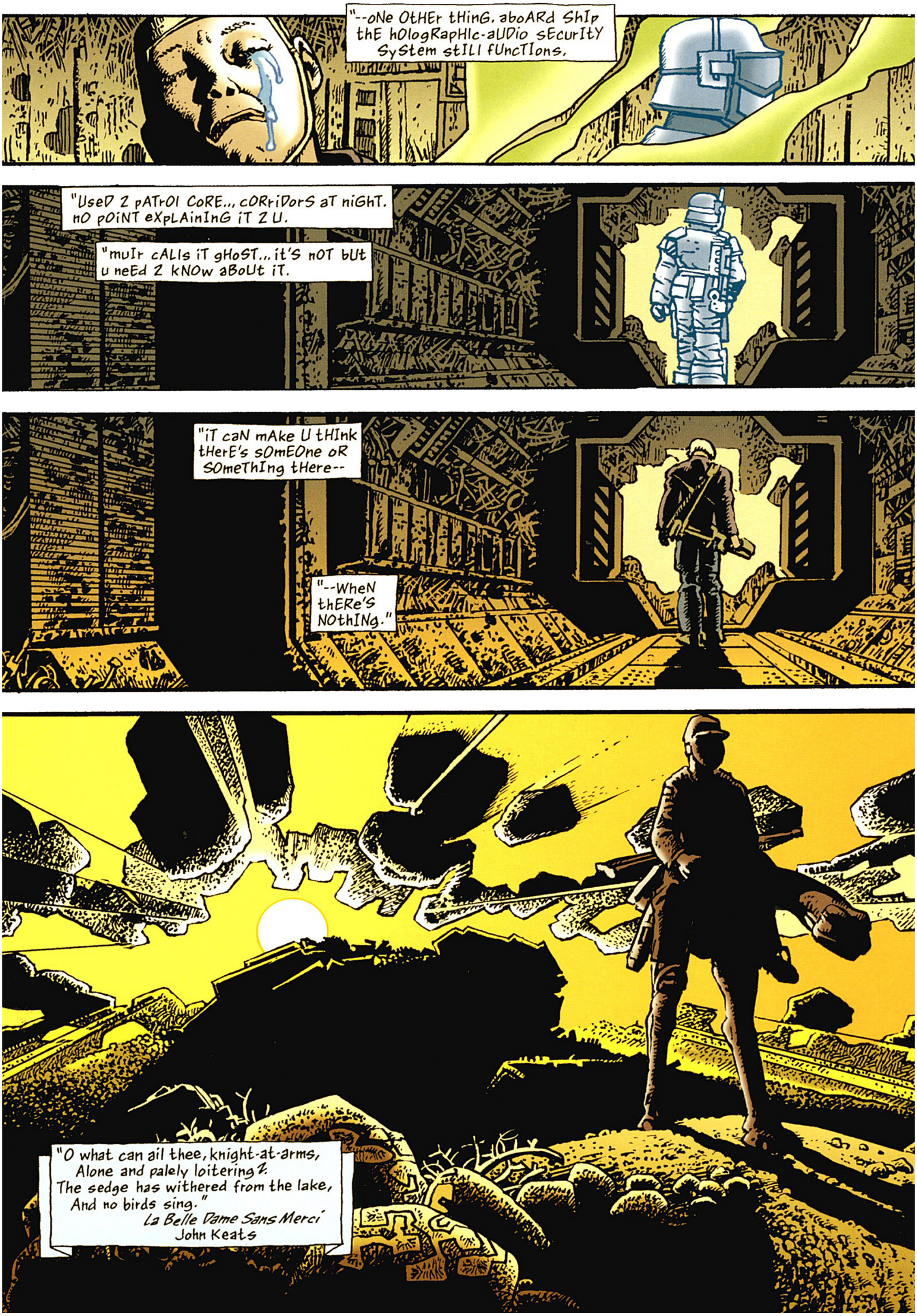
CHUFF
NICE INCENSE, MUIR. YOU CAN SMELL THE STENCH FOR MILES--OR WAS THAT YOU?
SISTER, YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU'VE DONE.
I SURE DO. THOSE THINGS. THOSE MONSTERS--YOUR PETS. I KILLED THEM ALL.
FIRSTFATHER TOLD ME HOW.
YOU VIOLATED MY SANCTUM? WHAT DID HE TELL--
I--I..
TH-THAT THING IS NOT FIRSTFATHER. IT'S NOT EVEN A MAN, YOU SAW IT.
I FOUND THAT PATHETIC CREATURE...SOMEWHERE. YOU CAN'T BELIEVE ANYTHING IT--
IT LIES!! DON'T LISTEN TO ITS LIES!!!
KLANG KLANG KLANG
LEGATE, LOOK!

THERE! *THERE* IS THE TRUTH! SEE IT. BELIEVE IT.
THE GHOST OF OUR TOXIC LEGACY OF ECO-DESTRUCTION. AN ARROGANCE THAT HAUNTS US TODAY.
I FEAR THIS TROUBLED SPIRIT NOT, FOR HE STALKS THESE HALLS IN PENANCE AND IN PAIN.
BUT *YOU* SHOULD FEAR IT, SISTER. THE DEATHLESS AGONY OF THE PAST IS YOUR FUTURE--
--IF YOU DO NOT HEED ME!
DAMMIT!

DON'T TOUCH IT!
NO, NO, NO! IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN!

YIIIIIII!
THIS TIME I'LL DIE! NO CAPTAIN PRICE TO SAVE ME!

ahuhhh, ahuhhhh, ahuhhhhhhh


"--oNe OtHEr tHinG. aboARd ShIp tHE hOlogRaphIc-aUDio sEcurITY System stIlI fUncTIons.
"UseD 2 pAtrOl CoRE... cORriDorS aT niGhT. nO pOINT exPlAInINg iT 2 U.
"muIr cAlls iT gHoST... it's nOT bUt u neEd 2 kNOW abOuT iT.
"iT caN mAke U tHInk thErE's sOmEOne oR SOmeThIng tHere--
"--WheN thERe's NOthINg."
"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, Alone and palely loitering? The sedge has withered from the lake, And no birds sing."
La Belle Dame Sans Merci
John Keats

ALCHEMY

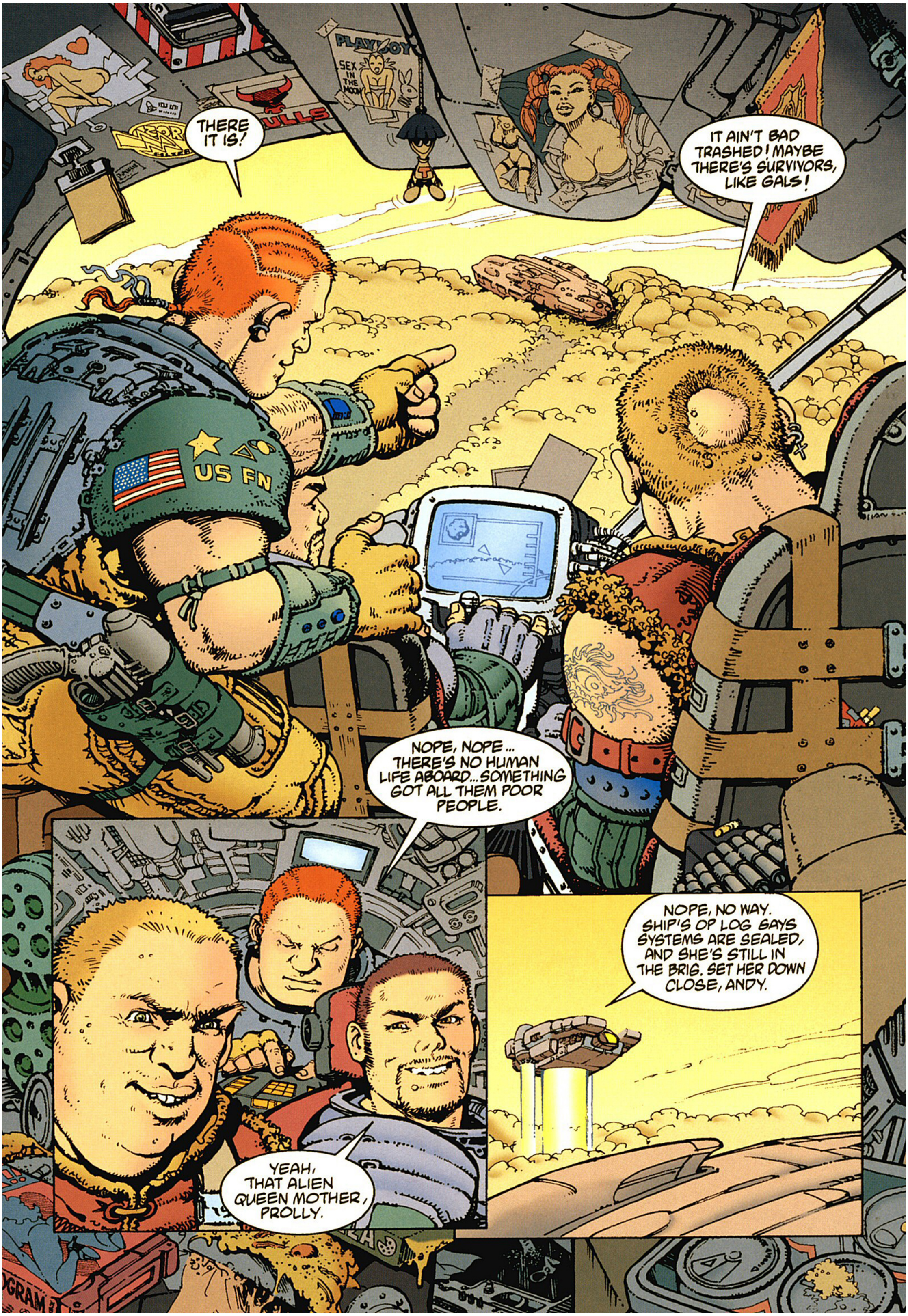
script
JOHN ARCUDI

art
RICHARD CORBEN

colors
JOHN POUND

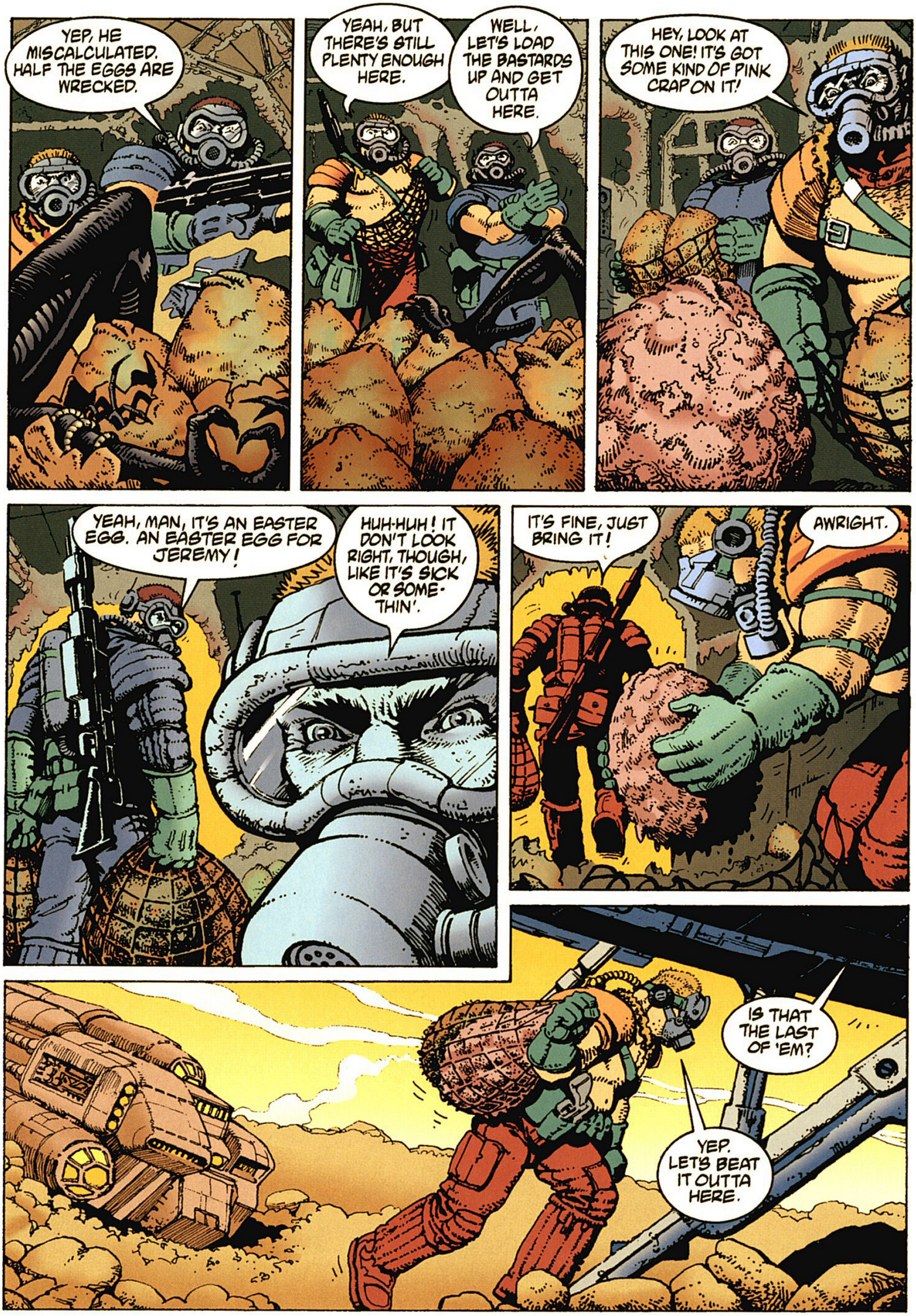
lettering
GARY FIELDS

title illustration
RICHARD CORBEN

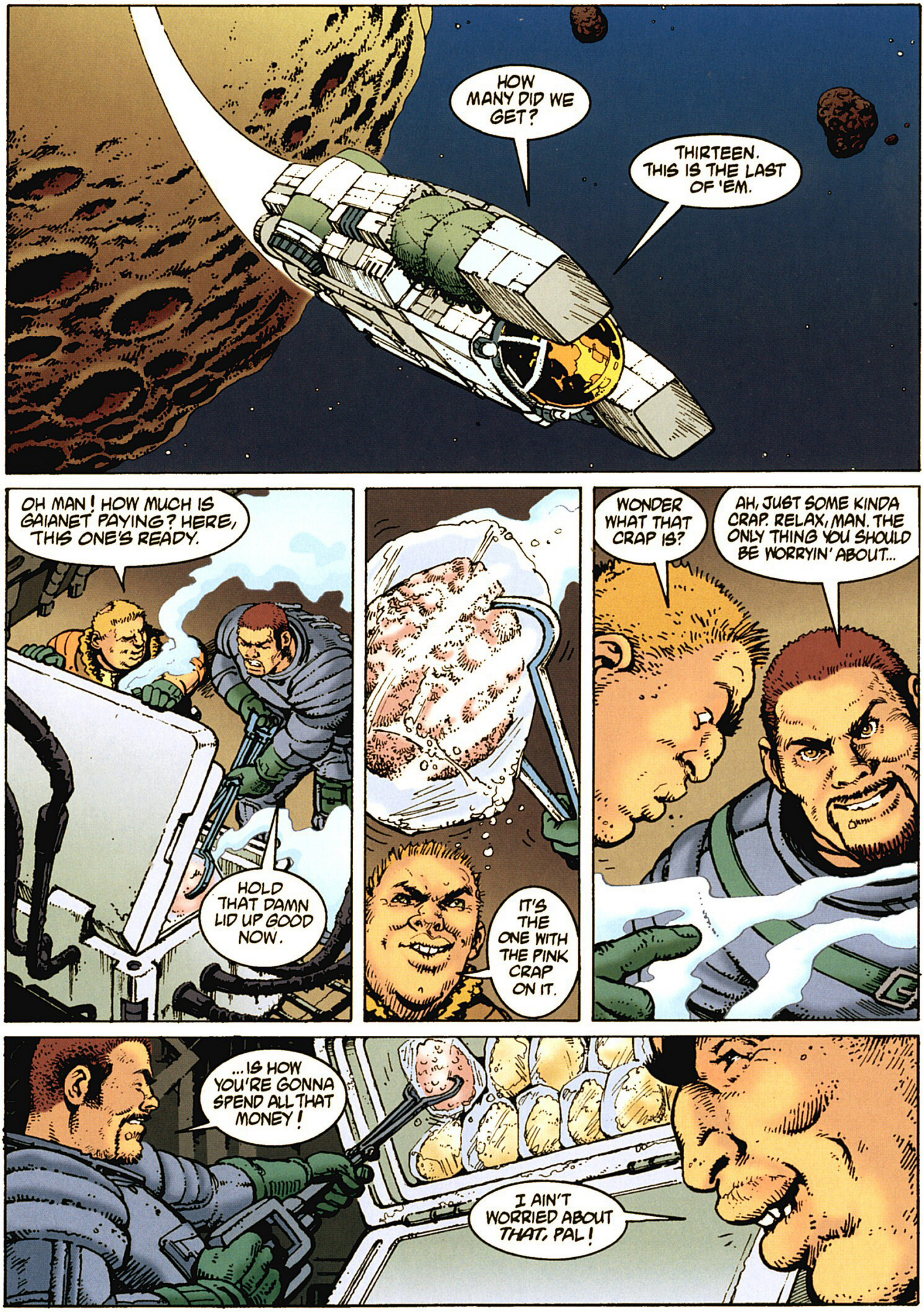

THERE IT IS!
IT AIN'T BAD TRASHED! MAYBE THERE'S SURVIVORS, LIKE GALS!
NOPE, NOPE... THERE'S NO HUMAN LIFE ABOARD... SOMETHING GOT ALL THEM POOR PEOPLE.
YEAH, THAT ALIEN QUEEN MOTHER, PROLLY.
NOPE, NO WAY. SHIP'S OP LOG SAYS SYSTEMS ARE SEALED, AND SHE'S STILL IN THE BRIG. SET HER DOWN CLOSE, ANDY.
US FN

COVER YOUR EARS, KITTENS.
WHONG!
ZIZ-
HEAD ON STRAIGHT, BOYS.
HERE'S THE HOLD. THE QUEEN AIN'T IN HERE, BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IS. IF IT'S BAD, JUST BLAST AND GET OUT FAST.
KLISH!
THSSSK!

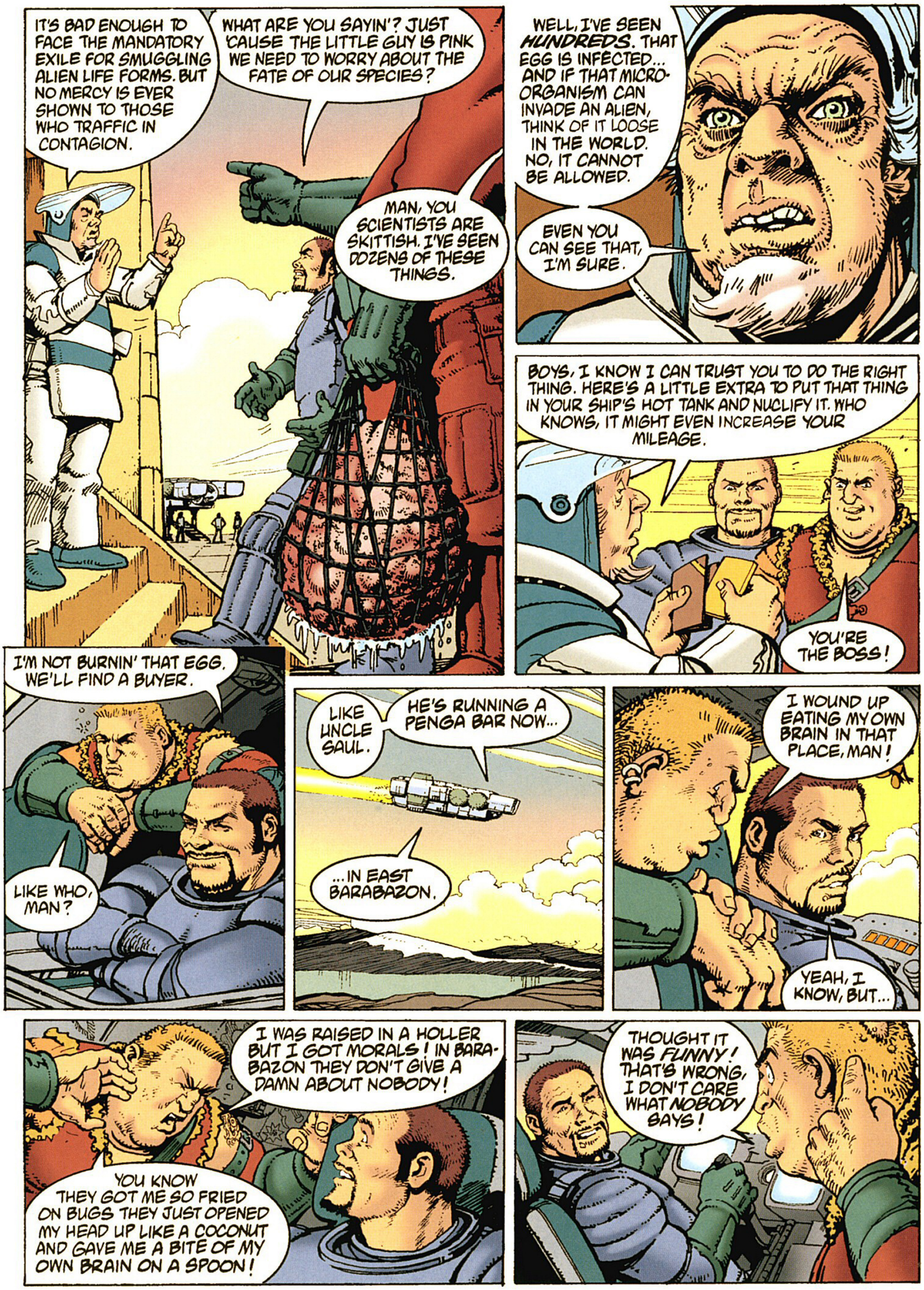
HOLY ZEUS!
EEERACKARRR!
ERIC!
FLUNCH!
PLANCH!
BLIST!
ARGH! I HATE 'EM!
CRIKES!
I GOT THE BITCH'S MONSTER BLOOD ON ME! LOUSY CRAP!!
ERIC'S LUNCHED.
SERVES HIM RIGHT, DUMB PECKERWOOD. HE WAS KINDA WRONG ABOUT HER WHERE-ABOUTS, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?



YEP, HE MISCALCULATED. HALF THE EGGS ARE WRECKED.
YEAH, BUT THERE'S STILL PLENTY ENOUGH HERE.
WELL, LET'S LOAD THE BASTARDS UP AND GET OUTTA HERE.
HEY, LOOK AT THIS ONE! IT'S GOT SOME KIND OF PINK CRAP ON IT!
YEAH, MAN, IT'S AN EASTER EGG. AN EASTER EGG FOR JEREMY!
HUH-HUH! IT DON'T LOOK RIGHT, THOUGH, LIKE IT'S SICK OR SOME-THIN'.
IT'S FINE, JUST BRING IT!
AWRIGHT.
IS THAT THE LAST OF 'EM?
YEP. LET'S BEAT IT OUTTA HERE.

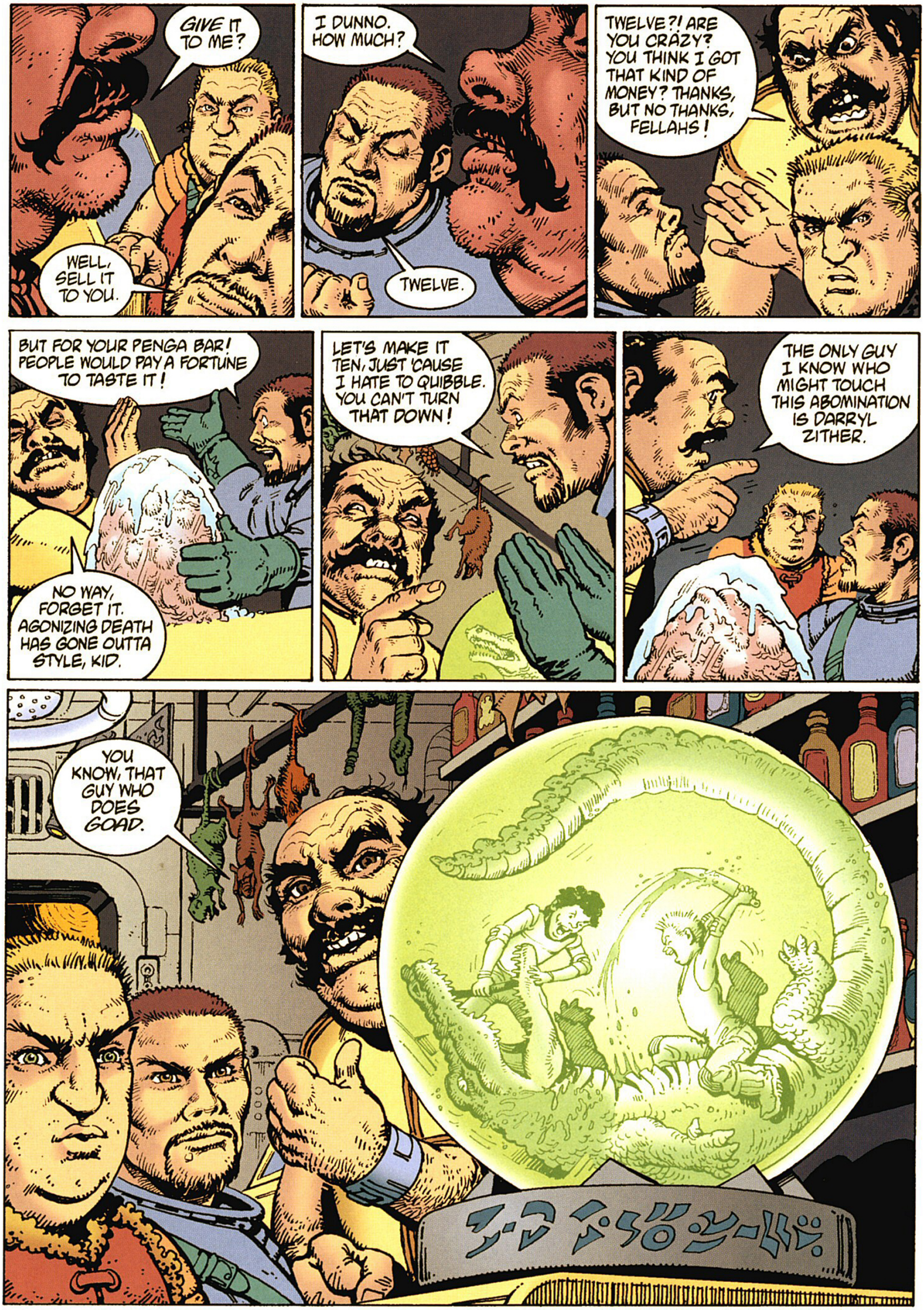

HOW MANY DID WE GET?
THIRTEEN. THIS IS THE LAST OF 'EM.
OH MAN! HOW MUCH IS GAIANET PAYING? HERE, THIS ONE'S READY.
HOLD THAT DAMN LID UP GOOD NOW.
IT'S THE ONE WITH THE PINK CRAP ON IT.
WONDER WHAT THAT CRAP IS?
AH, JUST SOME KINDA CRAP. RELAX, MAN. THE ONLY THING YOU SHOULD BE WORRYIN' ABOUT...
...IS HOW YOU'RE GONNA SPEND ALL THAT MONEY!
I AIN'T WORRIED ABOUT THAT, PAL!

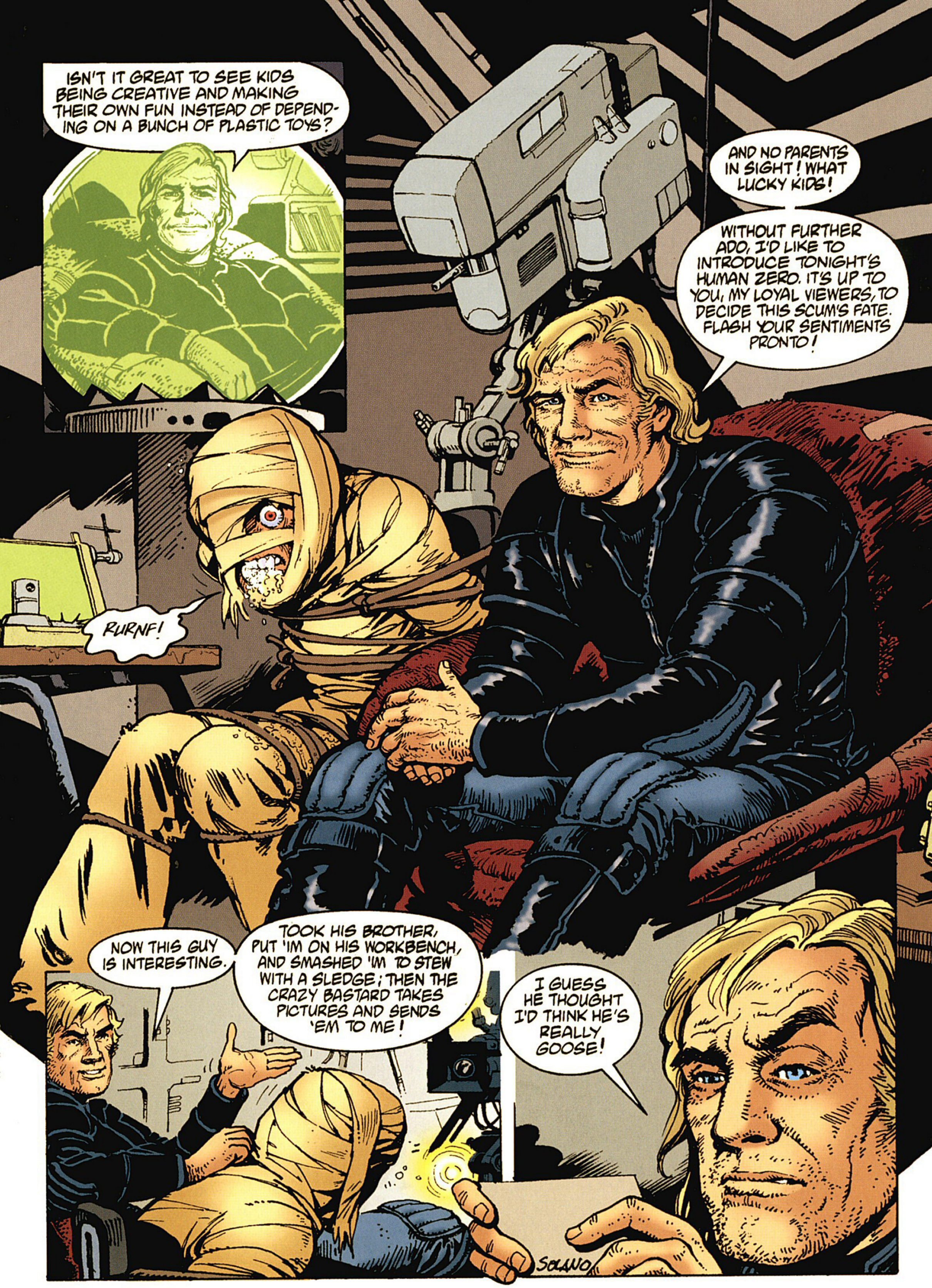
GAIANET
THIS SMELLS LIKE A SETUP! WHAT'S OUR STORY? ARE THEY GONNA WANT US TO SIGN SOMETHIN'?
THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF THIS DEAL. NO QUESTIONS ASKED. CALM DOWN, MAN.
ABSOLUTELY NO DELIVERIES WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE!
BUT, BUT...
THIS IS A CODE-RATED SHIPMENT FOR RUMFORD.
WOW! LOOK AT THAT!
HEY, COOL IT. YOU SOUND LIKE A HICK.
GAIANET
I'M SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT ERIC. HE WAS A REAL PRO. WELL, WELL YOU BOYS HAVE MADE QUITE A CATCH!
YOU CAN COUNT ON US, SIR.
THAT'S TEN, ELEVEN AND TWELVE! THERE YOU GO, GENTLEMEN.
TWELVE? WE BROUGHT THIRTEEN! I DIDN'T SAY NOTHIN' ABOUT A BAKER'S DOZEN!
NOR DID I. I SUGGEST YOU JETTISON THIS ONE FAST. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF IT. AND MAKE SURE IT GOES OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM, TOO. I DON'T WANT IT TRACED TO THIS SHIPMENT.

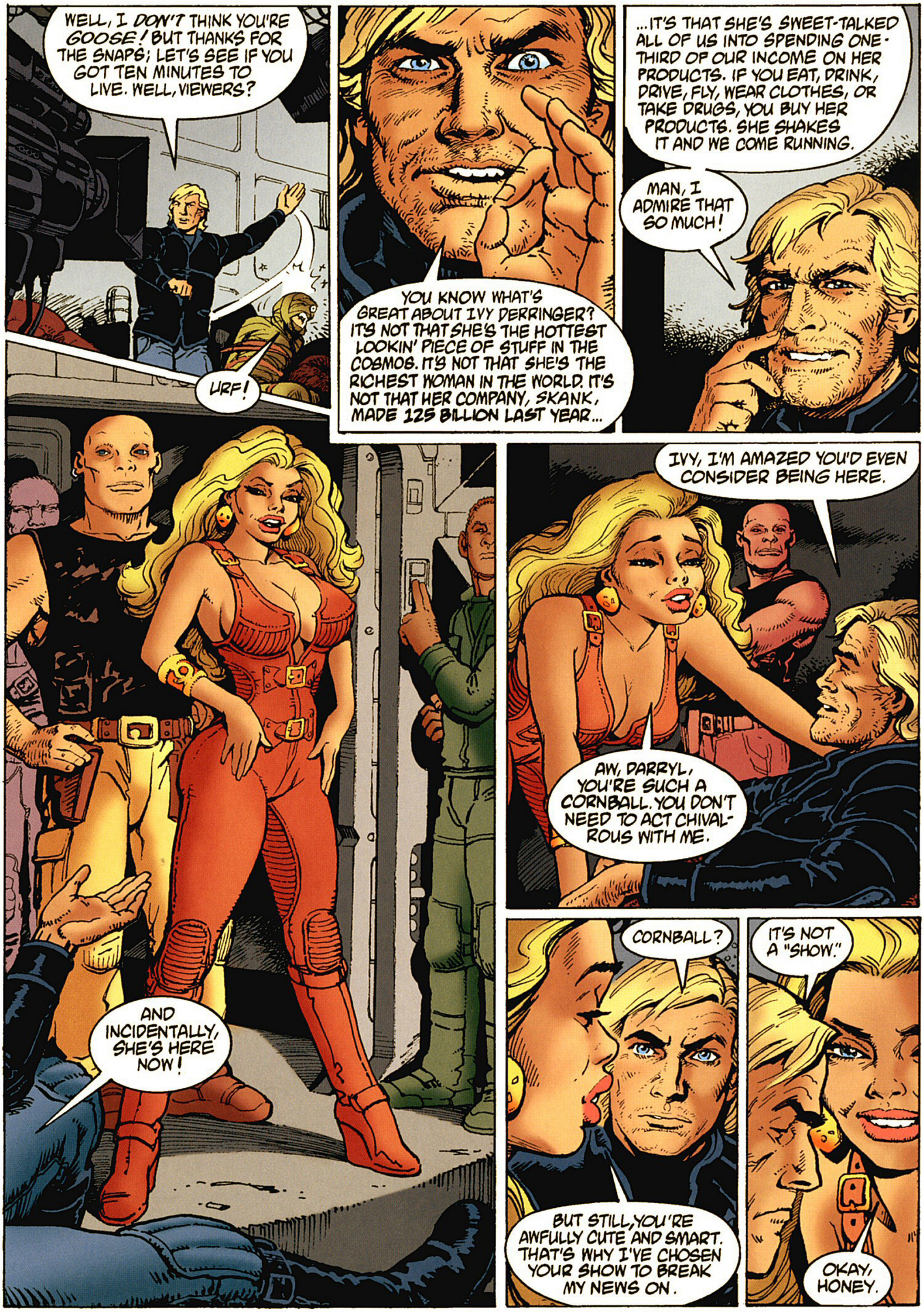

IT'S BAD ENOUGH TO FACE THE MANDATORY EXILE FOR SMUGGLING ALIEN LIFE FORMS. BUT NO MERCY IS EVER SHOWN TO THOSE WHO TRAFFIC IN CONTAGION.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYIN'? JUST 'CAUSE THE LITTLE GUY IS PINK WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE FATE OF OUR SPECIES?
MAN, YOU SCIENTISTS ARE SKITTISH. I'VE SEEN DOZENS OF THESE THINGS.
WELL, I'VE SEEN HUNDREDS. THAT EGG IS INFECTED... AND IF THAT MICRO-ORGANISM CAN INVADE AN ALIEN, THINK OF IT LOOSE IN THE WORLD. NO, IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED.
EVEN YOU CAN SEE THAT, I'M SURE.
BOYS, I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU TO DO THE RIGHT THING. HERE'S A LITTLE EXTRA TO PUT THAT THING IN YOUR SHIP'S HOT TANK AND NUCLIFY IT. WHO KNOWS, IT MIGHT EVEN INCREASE YOUR MILEAGE.
YOU'RE THE BOSS!
I'M NOT BURNIN' THAT EGG. WE'LL FIND A BUYER.
LIKE WHO, MAN?
LIKE UNCLE SAUL.
HE'S RUNNING A PENGA BAR NOW...
...IN EAST BARABAZON.
I WOUND UP EATING MY OWN BRAIN IN THAT PLACE, MAN!
YEAH, I KNOW, BUT...
I WAS RAISED IN A HOLLER BUT I GOT MORALS! IN BARABAZON THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT NOBODY!
YOU KNOW THEY GOT ME SO FRIED ON BUGS THEY JUST OPENED MY HEAD UP LIKE A COCONUT AND GAVE ME A BITE OF MY OWN BRAIN ON A SPOON!
THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY! THAT'S WRONG, I DON'T CARE WHAT NOBODY SAYS!

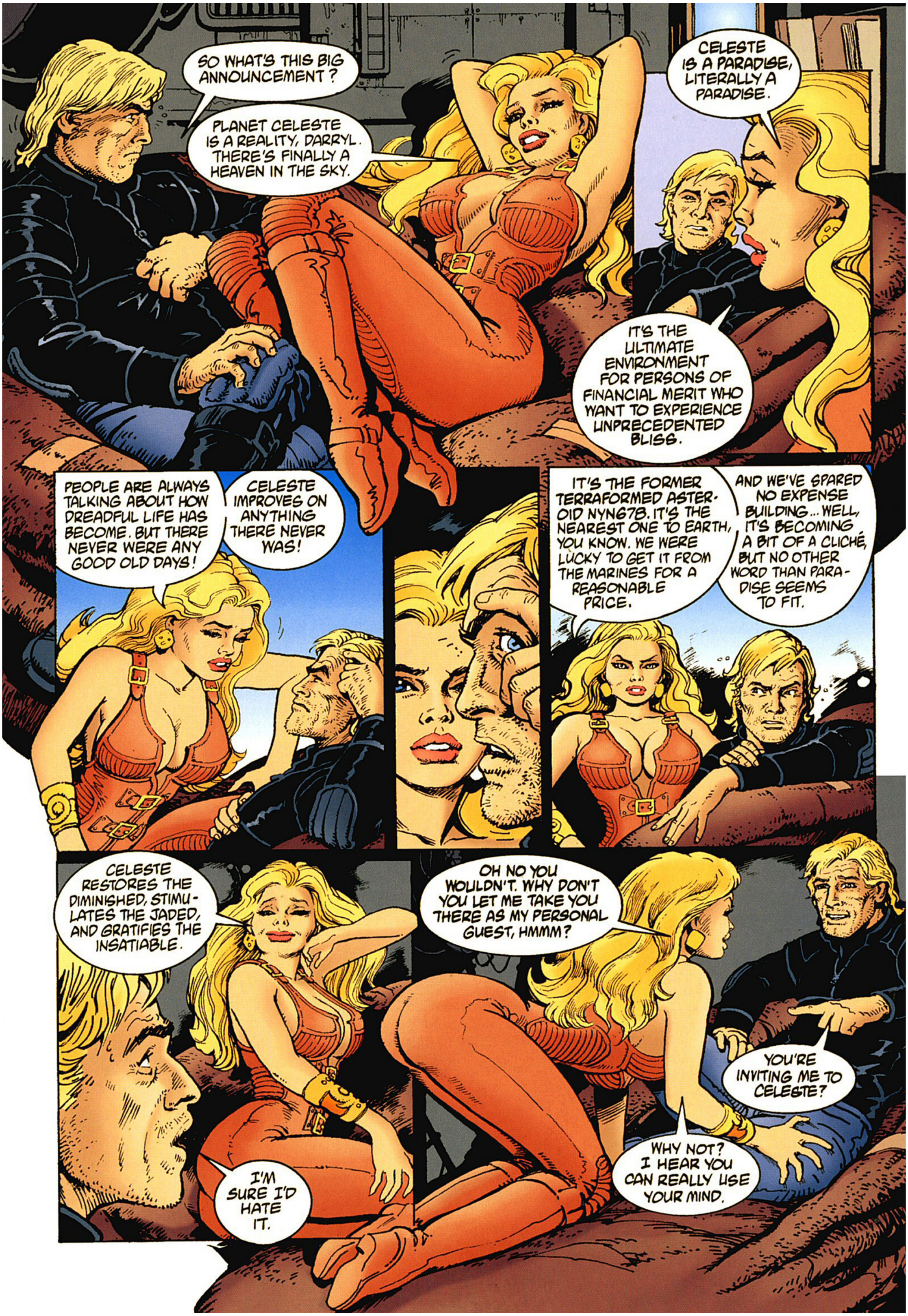
I KNOW. BUT WE GOTTA GO, JER! WHAT THE HELL ELSE ARE WE GONNA DO WITH THE THING?
I AIN'T GOIN' TO BARABAZON.
FINE, YOU CAN STAY IN THE SHIP.
Y'DAMN RIGHT I WILL.
I KNEW YOU'D WANT TO GO INTO TOWN ONCE WE GOT HERE, JER.
AW, I JUST CAN'T PASS UP ACTION LIKE THIS, DOGGONE IT!
WHIFFA DUNGIT? AW GONGA DUNGIT, AN IH NEFFA MEH ME CRAH! CAH MON!
YOU KIN TAKE YOUR BUGS AND STUFF 'EM, OLD MAN!
THERE IT IS!
YUM! MOUSE FAT!

I SEE THE BIG MONEY IS IN TOWN TODAY! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU GENTS? GRAB A CHAIR AND SAMPLE THINGS YOU CAN GET NOWHERE ON EARTH!
UNCLE SAUL! LONG TIME NO SEE!
YEAH, IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME! WHAT CAN I GET YOU, OLD PAL?
ACTUALLY, WE'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.
AIN'T THAT NICE. SET IT DOWN RIGHT THERE ON THE BAR WHY DON'TCHA.
NO PROBLEMO!
IS THAT THING WHAT I THINK IT IS?
YEP! 100% GENUINE EGG, QUIESCENTLY FROZEN AT THE PEAK OF FRESHNESS.
THUMP!
NOT TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH OR NOTHIN', BUT WHY'RE YOU BRINGIN' THIS THING TO ME?
GAIANET TURNED IT DOWN.
WELL, MOSTLY WE TURNED THEM DOWN. AND SINCE YOU AND ME GO WAY BACK...I THOUGHT, "HEYYYYY! LET'S GIVE IT TO UNCLE SAUL!"


GIVE IT TO ME?
WELL, SELL IT TO YOU.
I DUNNO. HOW MUCH?
TWELVE.
TWELVE?! ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU THINK I GOT THAT KIND OF MONEY? THANKS, BUT NO THANKS, FELLAHS!
BUT FOR YOUR PENGA BAR! PEOPLE WOULD PAY A FORTUNE TO TASTE IT!
NO WAY, FORGET IT. AGONIZING DEATH HAS GONE OUTTA STYLE, KID.
LET'S MAKE IT TEN, JUST 'CAUSE I HATE TO QUIBBLE. YOU CAN'T TURN THAT DOWN!
THE ONLY GUY I KNOW WHO MIGHT TOUCH THIS ABOMINATION IS DARRYL ZITHER.
YOU KNOW, THAT GUY WHO DOES GOAD.


ISN'T IT GREAT TO SEE KIDS BEING CREATIVE AND MAKING THEIR OWN FUN INSTEAD OF DEPENDING ON A BUNCH OF PLASTIC TOYS?
AND NO PARENTS IN SIGHT! WHAT LUCKY KIDS!
WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE TONIGHT'S HUMAN ZERO. IT'S UP TO YOU, MY LOYAL VIEWERS, TO DECIDE THIS SCUM'S FATE. FLASH YOUR SENTIMENTS PRONTO!
RURNF!
NOW THIS GUY IS INTERESTING.
TOOK HIS BROTHER, PUT 'IM ON HIS WORKBENCH, AND SMASHED 'IM TO STEW WITH A SLEDGE; THEN THE CRAZY BASTARD TAKES PICTURES AND SENDS 'EM TO ME!
I GUESS HE THOUGHT I'D THINK HE'S REALLY GOOSE!
SOLANO

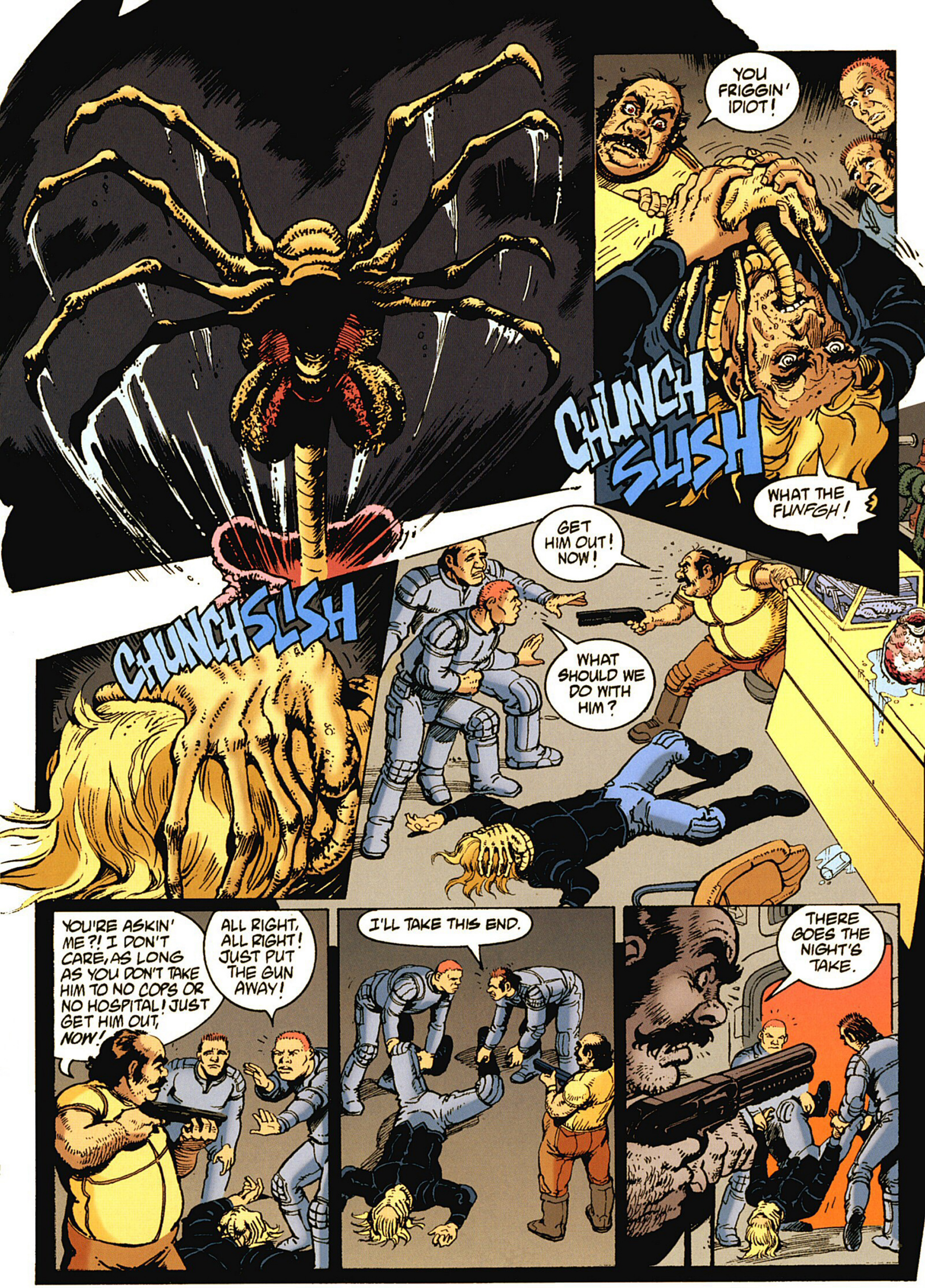

WELL, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOOSE! BUT THANKS FOR THE SNAPS; LET'S SEE IF YOU GOT TEN MINUTES TO LIVE. WELL, VIEWERS?
URF!
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT IVY DERRINGER? IT'S NOT THAT SHE'S THE HOTTEST LOOKIN' PIECE OF STUFF IN THE COSMOS. IT'S NOT THAT SHE'S THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD. IT'S NOT THAT HER COMPANY, SKANK, MADE 125 BILLION LAST YEAR...
...IT'S THAT SHE'S SWEET-TALKED ALL OF US INTO SPENDING ONE-THIRD OF OUR INCOME ON HER PRODUCTS. IF YOU EAT, DRINK, DRIVE, FLY, WEAR CLOTHES, OR TAKE DRUGS, YOU BUY HER PRODUCTS. SHE SHAKES IT AND WE COME RUNNING.
MAN, I ADMIRE THAT SO MUCH!
AND INCIDENTALLY, SHE'S HERE NOW!
IVY, I'M AMAZED YOU'D EVEN CONSIDER BEING HERE.
AW, DARRYL, YOU'RE SUCH A CORNBALL. YOU DON'T NEED TO ACT CHIVALROUS WITH ME.
CORNBALL?
BUT STILL, YOU'RE AWFULLY CUTE AND SMART. THAT'S WHY I'VE CHOSEN YOUR SHOW TO BREAK MY NEWS ON.
IT'S NOT A "SHOW."
OKAY, HONEY.


SO WHAT'S THIS BIG ANNOUNCEMENT?
PLANET CELESTE IS A REALITY, DARRYL. THERE'S FINALLY A HEAVEN IN THE SKY.
CELESTE IS A PARADISE, LITERALLY A PARADISE.
IT'S THE ULTIMATE ENVIRONMENT FOR PERSONS OF FINANCIAL MERIT WHO WANT TO EXPERIENCE UNPRECEDENTED BLISS.
PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT HOW DREADFUL LIFE HAS BECOME. BUT THERE NEVER WERE ANY GOOD OLD DAYS!
CELESTE IMPROVES ON ANYTHING THERE NEVER WAS!
IT'S THE FORMER TERRAFORMED ASTEROID NYN678. IT'S THE NEAREST ONE TO EARTH, YOU KNOW. WE WERE LUCKY TO GET IT FROM THE MARINES FOR A REASONABLE PRICE.
AND WE'VE SPARED NO EXPENSE BUILDING... WELL, IT'S BECOMING A BIT OF A CLICHÉ, BUT NO OTHER WORD THAN PARADISE SEEMS TO FIT.
CELESTE RESTORES THE DIMINISHED, STIMULATES THE JADED, AND GRATIFIES THE INSATIABLE.
I'M SURE I'D HATE IT.
OH NO YOU WOULDN'T. WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TAKE YOU THERE AS MY PERSONAL GUEST, HMMM?
YOU'RE INVITING ME TO CELESTE?
WHY NOT? I HEAR YOU CAN REALLY USE YOUR MIND.

WHEN?!
TOMORROW MORNING. I'LL COME BY YOUR PLACE.
OKAY, WHAT THE HELL! NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED!
WELL, YOU AIN'T MUSTERED TOO MUCH SYMPATHY FROM OUR VIEWERS OUT THERE?
ANY LAST WORDS?
ZIZZ...
CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? SHE JUST PICKED HIM UP LIKE THEY WERE IN A BAR! IVY DERRINGER AND DARRYL ZITHER! AMAZING!
THAT WASN'T REAL. IT WAS SOME KIND OF SETUP.
HEY, WELL, STICK AROUND AND YOU CAN ASK DARRYL HIMSELF TONIGHT!
ARE YOU TELLIN' US HE'LL BE HERE TONIGHT?
SURE, HE'S A REGULAR. HE LIVES JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
SAY, GUYS, MAYBE I WAS TOO QUICK IN PASSING UP THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BUY THAT ALIEN EGG. NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I BET LOTS OF PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO TRY THAT...
...IMPRESS THEIR GIRLS, WHATEVER.
SO LET'S DISCUSS THIS, HEY? I'LL LET YOU HAVE SOME OF THE HOUSE'S FINEST WHILE WE CHAT. YOU'LL LOVE IT!

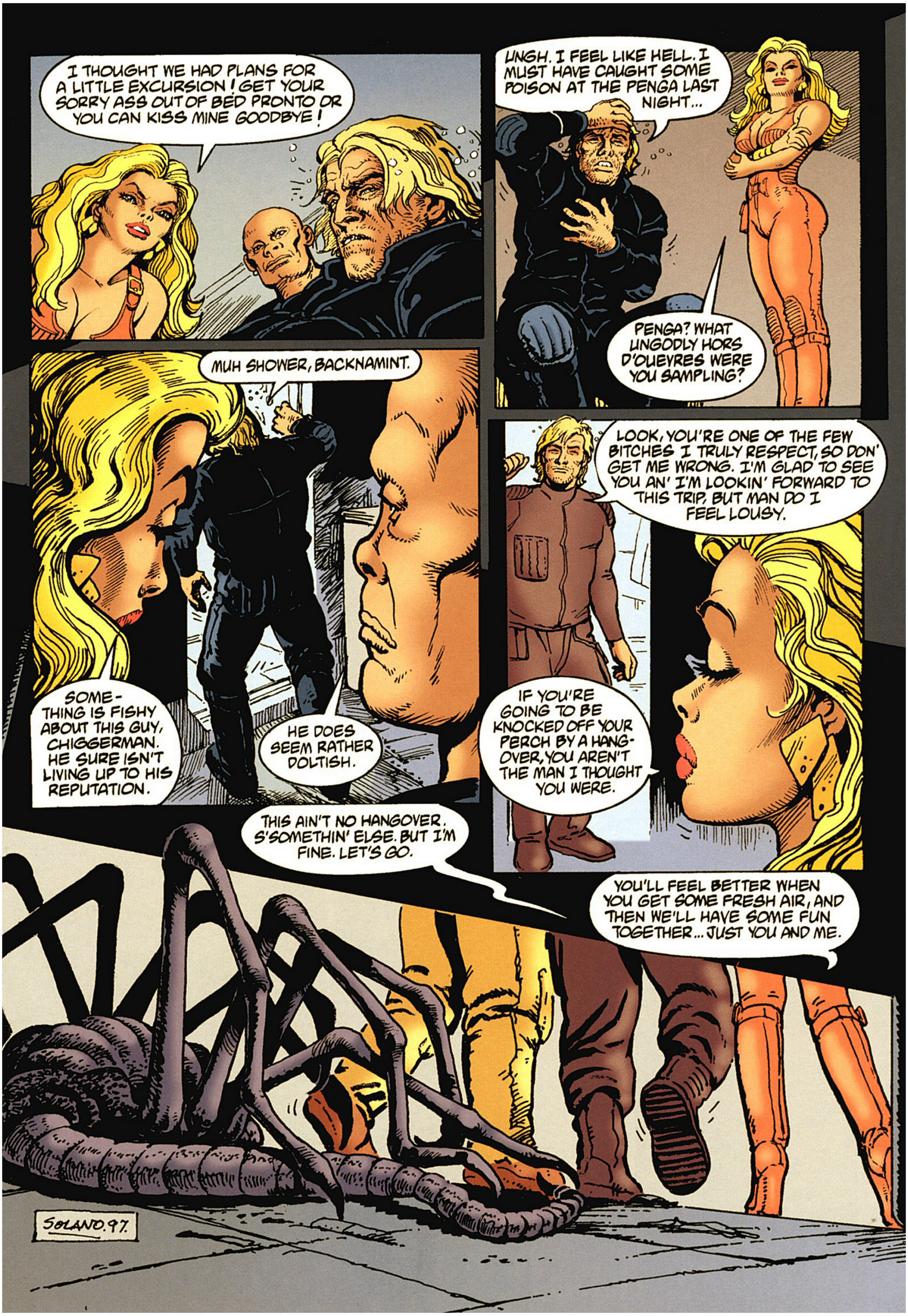
HEY, KID, YOU'RE IN FULL CONTROL!
I KNOW.
HELP YOURSELF, KID. YOU KNOW WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS.
I KNOW.
YOU'RE IT, MR. ZITHER!
FONG.
ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT GOING OUT WITH IVY DERRINGER?
I'M MORE EXCITED ABOUT WHAT UNCLE SAUL SAYS HE'S GOT FOR ME.
KID, YOU GOT A MOUTH ON YOU. I WAS THINKIN' THIS WOULD BE AN AFTER-HOURS AFFAIR.

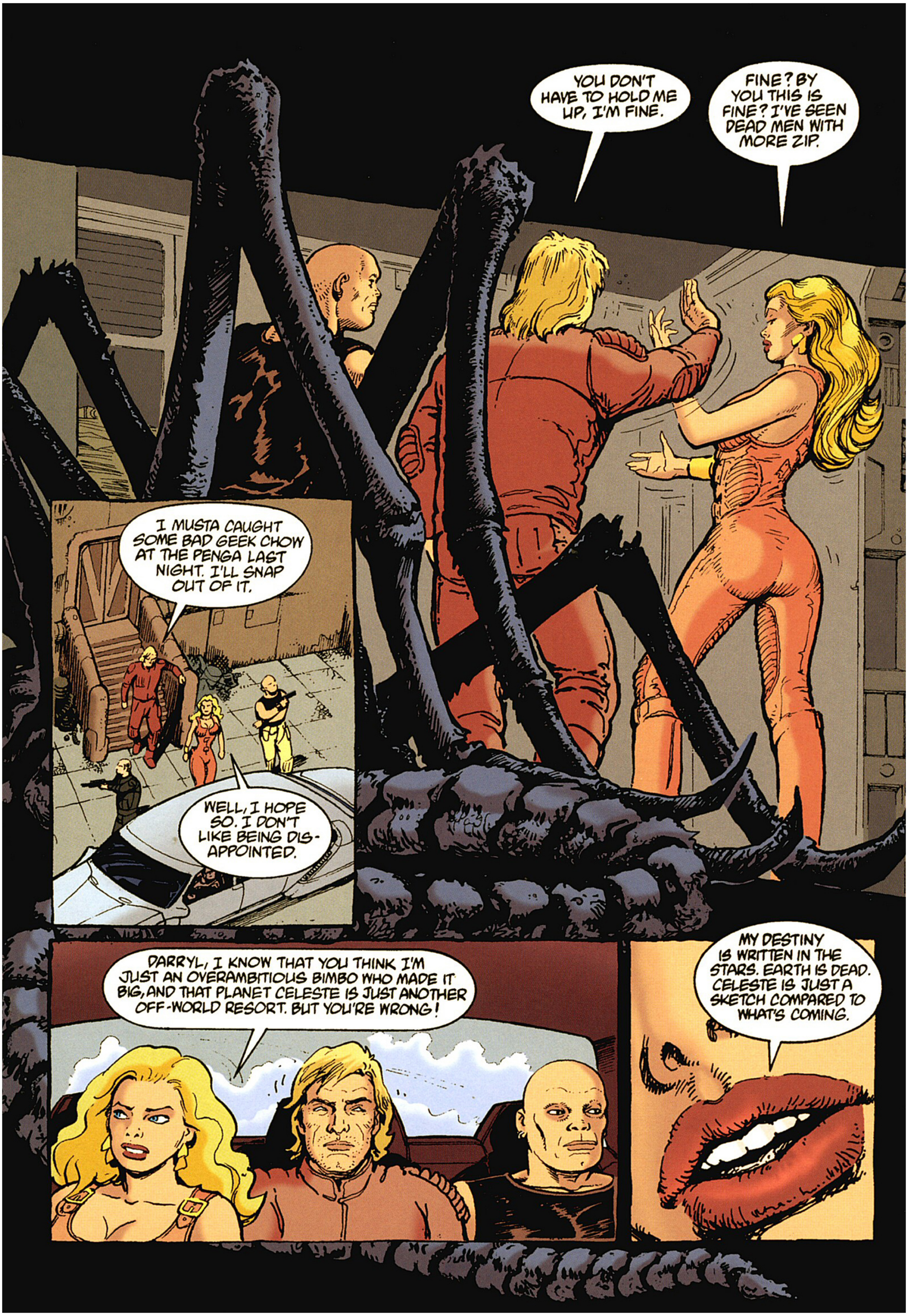
I'M NOT GOING TO BE HERE AFTER HOURS! I'VE GOT AN EARLY SHUTTLE TO CATCH! DON'T YOU TRUST ALL THESE GOOD FRIENDS OF YOURS? YOUR BELOVED PATRONS?
OKAY, HAVE IT YOUR WAY, SMART GUY. MAN, YOU'RE AN UNSATISFYING FELLA TO GIVE A GIFT TO...
BUT IT AIN'T IN MY NATURE TO BEGRUDGE, SO HERE IT IS! IT'S ALL YOURS, Y'CRAZY SICKO! ALL I ASK IN RETURN IS A DAILY MENTION OF THE BAR ON YOUR SHOW.
PLONK!
H-HEY, WHATSA MATTER? YOU THINK IT'S GONNA BITE YOU? DON'T YOU CANDY-ASS TOURISTS KNOW DIS THING IS FLASH-FROZEN?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT THAT THING IS? IT ISN'T SAFE!
C-COOL IT, SWEET-HEART! THE L'IL BUGGER IS FROZEN SOLID!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER! YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF IT!
QUIET.
HEY, KID, COME ON AWAY FROM THERE.

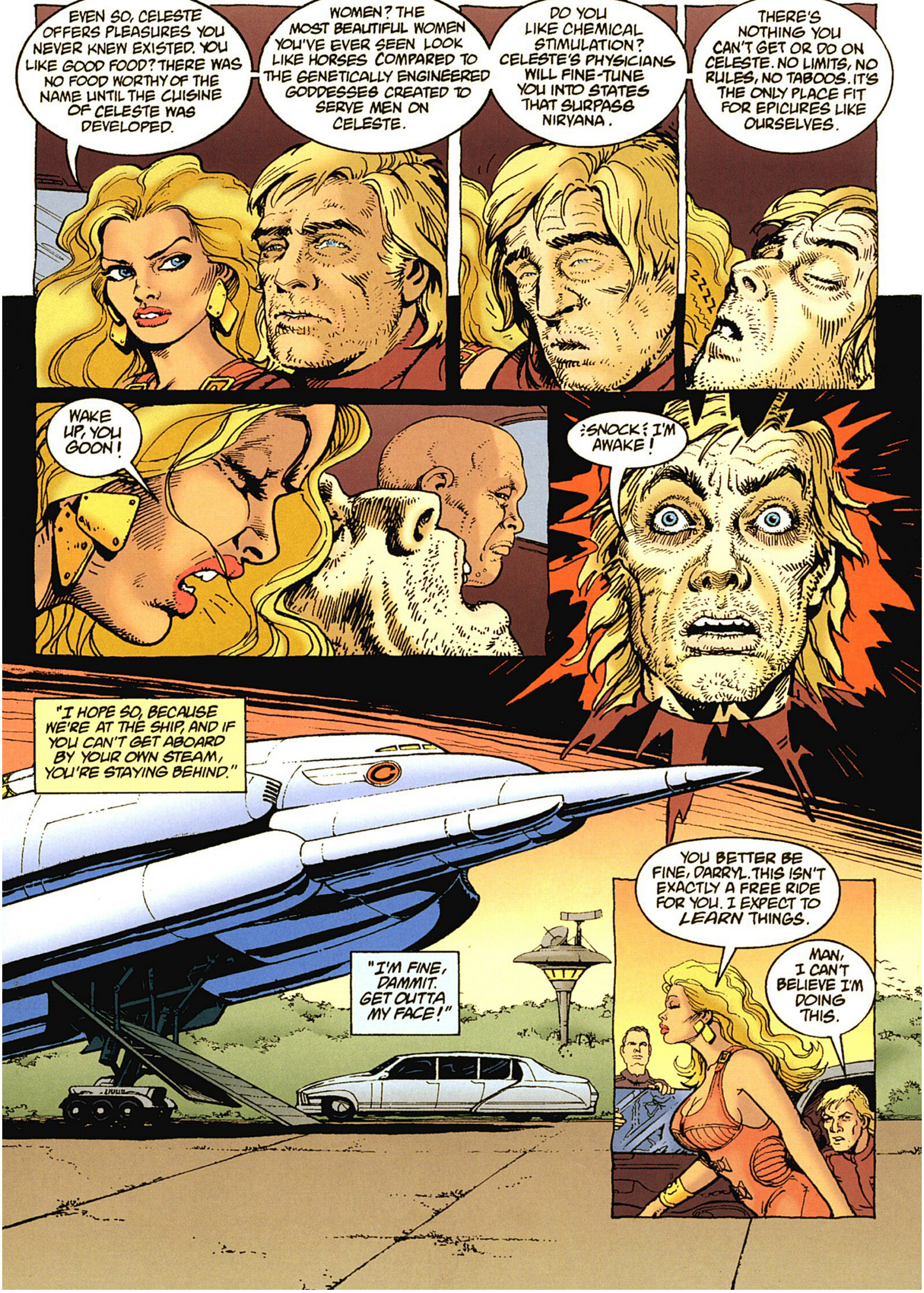

YOU FRIGGIN' IDIOT!
CHUNCH SLISH
WHAT THE FUNFGH!
GET HIM OUT! NOW!
CHUNCHSLISH
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH HIM?
YOU'RE ASKIN' ME?! I DON'T CARE, AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TAKE HIM TO NO COPS OR NO HOSPITAL! JUST GET HIM OUT, NOW!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! JUST PUT THE GUN AWAY!
I'LL TAKE THIS END.
THERE GOES THE NIGHT'S TAKE.

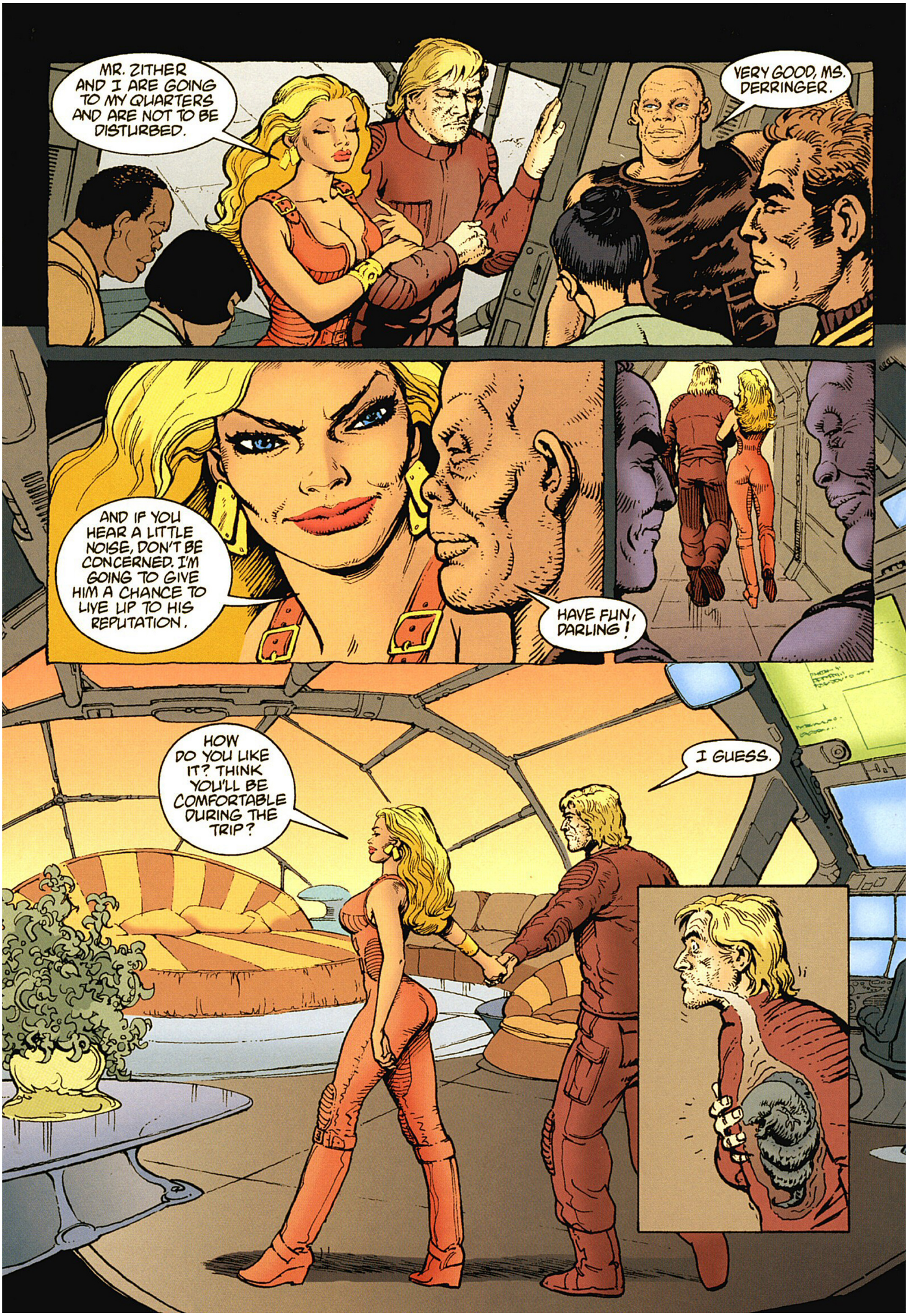
WHY DON'T WE JUST DUMP HIM HERE?
SOME FRIEND YOU ARE! DO YOU THINK HE'D JUST ABANDON YOU IF YOU NEEDED HELP?
BUMP
IN A HEARTBEAT, MAN. HE'S DONE IT BEFORE.
YEAH, BUT THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT HIM.
OKAY, JUST FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE, I'LL HELP YOU DRAG HIS ASS HOME. IT WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME, HUH?
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
LET'S GET HIM INSIDE, PUT HIM TO BED.
MAYBE NEXT TIME, MR. Z WILL ORDER OFF THE MENU.
WILL YOU WISE UP? ZITHER IS HISTORY NOW!
YOU HAD BALLS LIKE GRAPEFRUIT, MAN.
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.

HELLO?
LET'S NOT TAKE ANY CHANCES, HONEY. THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT A GUY WHO LIVES IN A PLACE LIKE THIS MIGHT DO.
OH, PUT THAT THING AWAY. THIS IS A DATE, NOT A HIT.
APPARENTLY HE HAS NO HOUSEKEEPER.
LOOK, HERE HE IS. THE CAD HASN'T EVEN GOTTEN OUT OF BED YET.
WHUHSLG?
SLAP!


I THOUGHT WE HAD PLANS FOR A LITTLE EXCURSION! GET YOUR SORRY ASS OUT OF BED PRONTO OR YOU CAN KISS MINE GOODBYE!
UNGH. I FEEL LIKE HELL. I MUST HAVE CAUGHT SOME POISON AT THE PENGA LAST NIGHT...
PENGA? WHAT UNGODLY HORS D'OUEVRES WERE YOU SAMPLING?
MUH SHOWER, BACKNAMINT.
SOME-THING IS FISHY ABOUT THIS GUY, CHIGGERMAN. HE SURE ISN'T LIVING UP TO HIS REPUTATION.
HE DOES SEEM RATHER DOLTISH.
LOOK, YOU'RE ONE OF THE FEW BITCHES I TRULY RESPECT, SO DON' GET ME WRONG. I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU AN' I'M LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THIS TRIP, BUT MAN DO I FEEL LOUSY.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE KNOCKED OFF YOUR PERCH BY A HANG-OVER, YOU AREN'T THE MAN I THOUGHT YOU WERE.
THIS AIN'T NO HANGOVER. S'SOMETHIN' ELSE. BUT I'M FINE. LET'S GO.
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER WHEN YOU GET SOME FRESH AIR, AND THEN WE'LL HAVE SOME FUN TOGETHER... JUST YOU AND ME.
SOLANO.97.

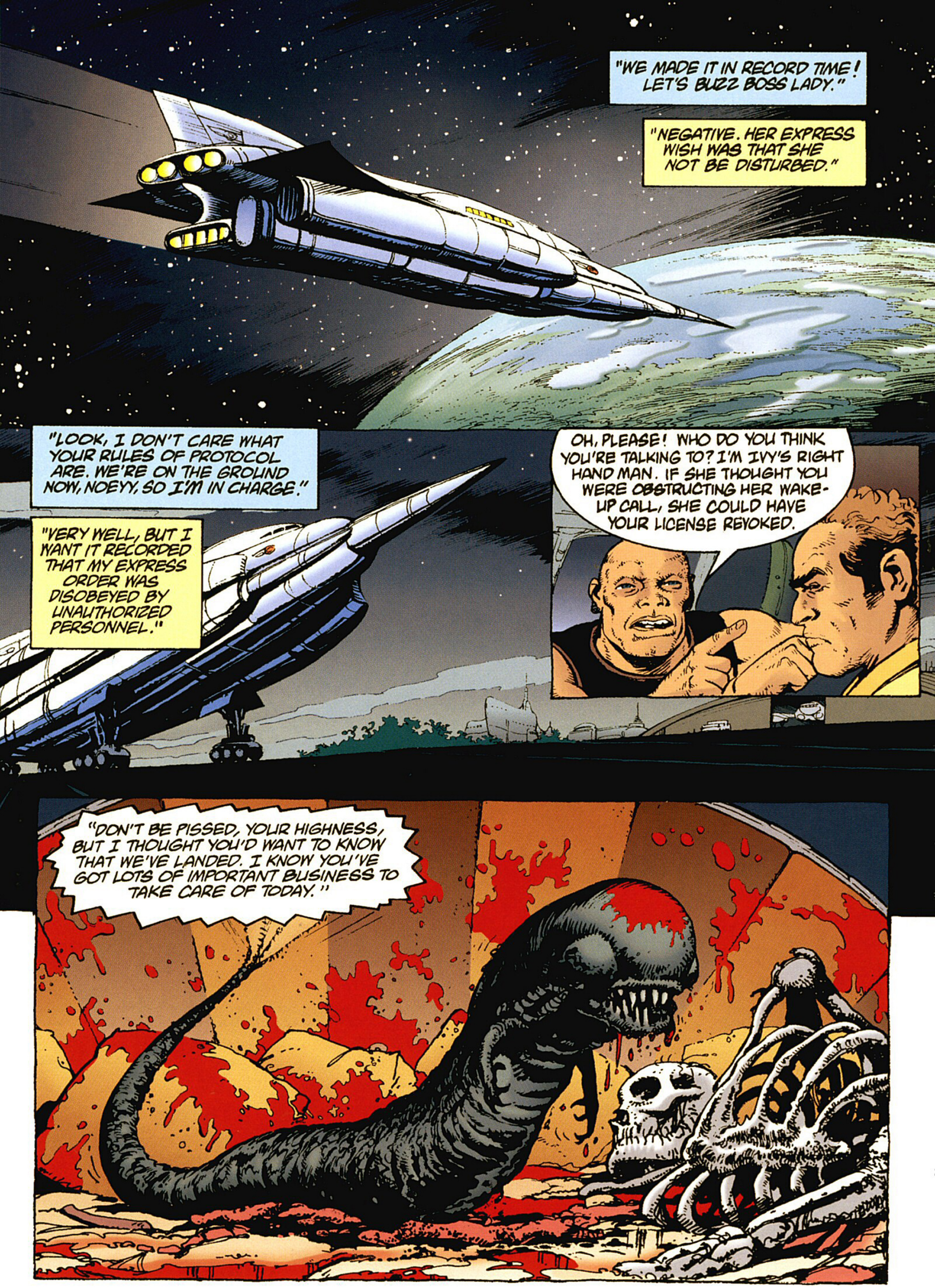

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD ME UP, I'M FINE.
FINE? BY YOU THIS IS FINE? I'VE SEEN DEAD MEN WITH MORE ZIP.
I MUSTA CAUGHT SOME BAD GEEK CHOW AT THE PENGA LAST NIGHT. I'LL SNAP OUT OF IT.
WELL, I HOPE SO. I DON'T LIKE BEING DIS-APPOINTED.
DARRYL, I KNOW THAT YOU THINK I'M JUST AN OVERAMBITIOUS BIMBO WHO MADE IT BIG, AND THAT PLANET CELESTE IS JUST ANOTHER OFF-WORLD RESORT. BUT YOU'RE WRONG!
MY DESTINY IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS. EARTH IS DEAD. CELESTE IS JUST A SKETCH COMPARED TO WHAT'S COMING.

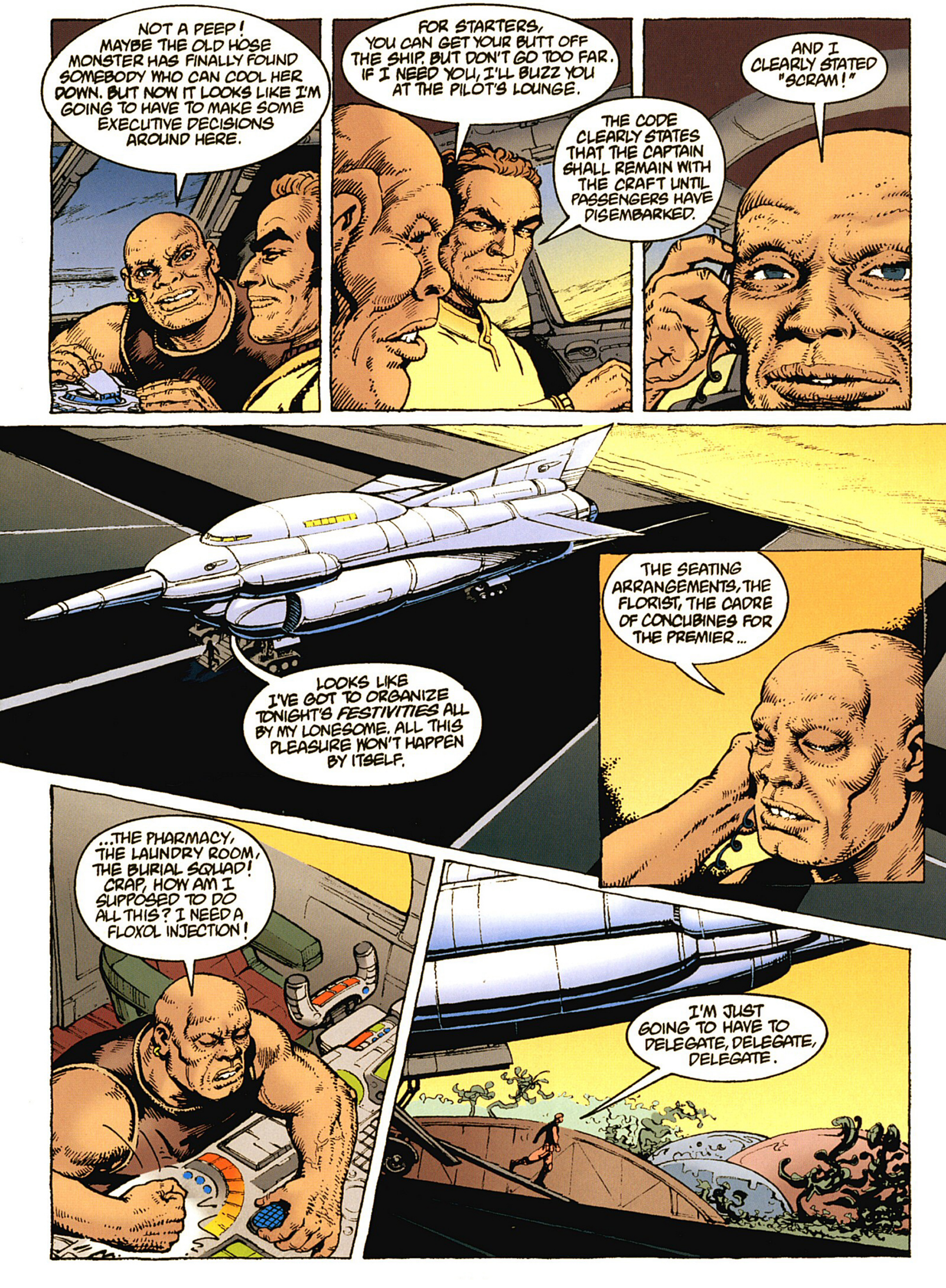

EVEN SO, CELESTE OFFERS PLEASURES YOU NEVER KNEW EXISTED. YOU LIKE GOOD FOOD? THERE WAS NO FOOD WORTHY OF THE NAME UNTIL THE CUISINE OF CELESTE WAS DEVELOPED.
WOMEN? THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN YOU'VE EVER SEEN LOOK LIKE HORSES COMPARED TO THE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED GODDESSES CREATED TO SERVE MEN ON CELESTE.
DO YOU LIKE CHEMICAL STIMULATION? CELESTE'S PHYSICIANS WILL FINE-TUNE YOU INTO STATES THAT SURPASS NIRVANA.
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T GET OR DO ON CELESTE. NO LIMITS, NO RULES, NO TABOOS. IT'S THE ONLY PLACE FIT FOR EPICURES LIKE OURSELVES.
ZZZZ
WAKE UP, YOU GOON!
:SNOCK: I'M AWAKE!
"I HOPE SO, BECAUSE WE'RE AT THE SHIP, AND IF YOU CAN'T GET ABOARD BY YOUR OWN STEAM, YOU'RE STAYING BEHIND."
"I'M FINE, DAMMIT. GET OUTTA MY FACE!"
YOU BETTER BE FINE, DARRYL. THIS ISN'T EXACTLY A FREE RIDE FOR YOU. I EXPECT TO LEARN THINGS.
MAN, I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS.


MR. ZITHER AND I ARE GOING TO MY QUARTERS AND ARE NOT TO BE DISTURBED.
VERY GOOD, MS. DERRINGER.
AND IF YOU HEAR A LITTLE NOISE, DON'T BE CONCERNED. I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO LIVE UP TO HIS REPUTATION.
HAVE FUN, DARLING!
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT? THINK YOU'LL BE COMFORTABLE DURING THE TRIP?
I GUESS.

COME HERE AND SHOW ME WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF.
JUST A MINUTE. SOMETHING'S WRONG.
WRONG?
YEAH, REALLY WRONG.
WHAT A DUD YOU TURNED OUT TO BE! WHAT THE HELL'S EATING YOU, ANYWAY?
RUH...RUH... UUUUCHK!
AWWRGH!
SKLARNCH
OMIGOD!
HOLY HELL!
HISSS!
GHACCKK
HISSSS!
NOT ME!
ULK! HRUSK!
SKREEIIK!
UNN! GOT YOU...

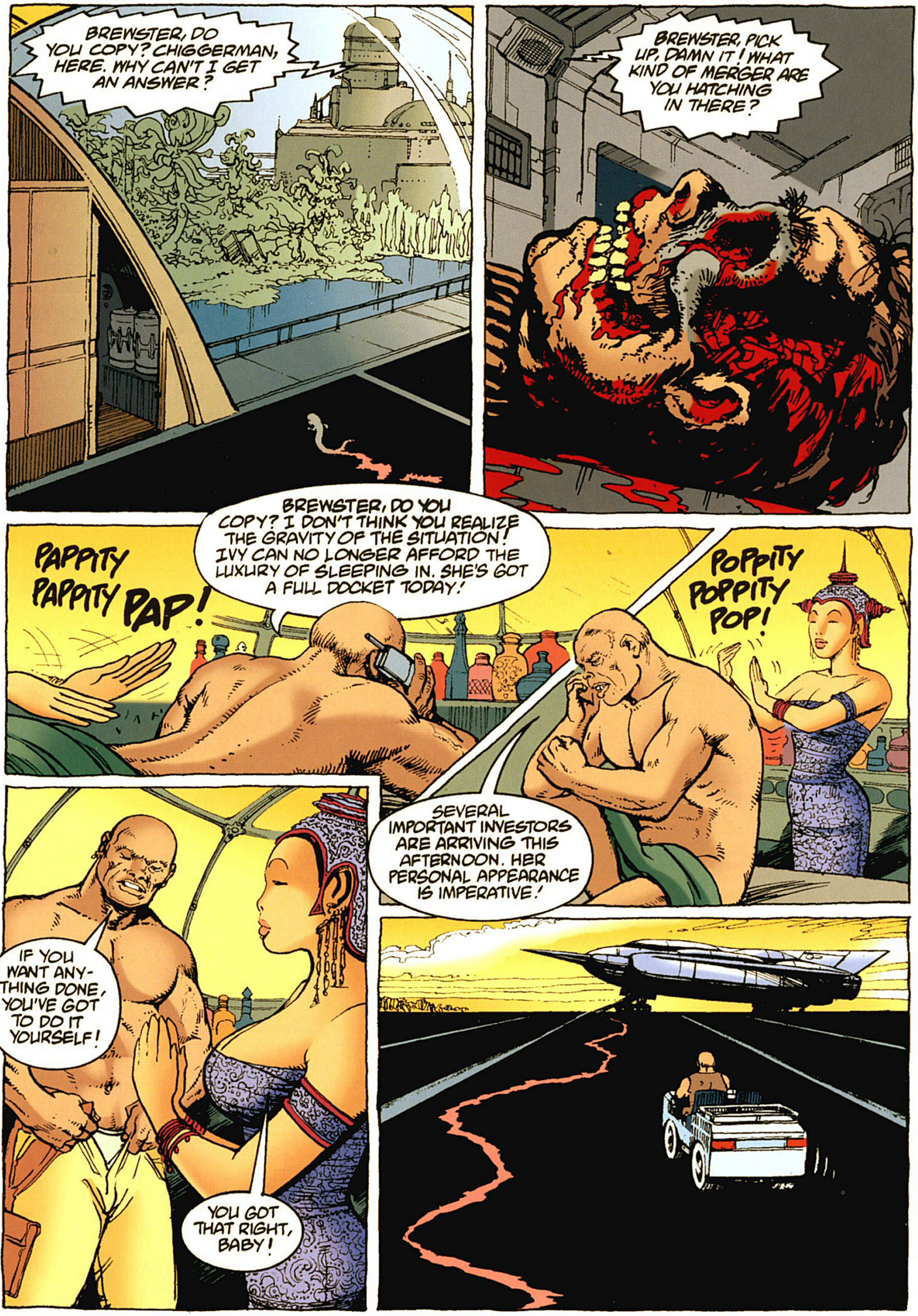
SSSSSSSSS
SKRIIEEK!
UNGH! TAKE THAT, YOU DAMN MONSTER!
SMASH
WHUMP
WHONK
SSSSSS
NOOOOOOOOO!
NO! ACK! HURNH! OH, NO!
CRAASH!
THUD!
WHOMP!
ARWWK!
NO! NO! NO!
CHAK! SHISH! CHUK!
SHE SURE MANAGED TO ROUSE HIM, DIDN'T SHE?
WHUNCH!
GURGLE
CRUNCH!
GHASSSK.


"WE MADE IT IN RECORD TIME! LET'S BUZZ BOSS LADY."
"NEGATIVE. HER EXPRESS WISH WAS THAT SHE NOT BE DISTURBED."
"LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR RULES OF PROTOCOL ARE. WE'RE ON THE GROUND NOW, NOEYY, SO I'M IN CHARGE."
"VERY WELL, BUT I WANT IT RECORDED THAT MY EXPRESS ORDER WAS DISOBEYED BY UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL."
OH, PLEASE! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO? I'M IVY'S RIGHT HAND MAN. IF SHE THOUGHT YOU WERE OBSTRUCTING HER WAKE-UP CALL, SHE COULD HAVE YOUR LICENSE REVOKED.
"DON'T BE PISSED, YOUR HIGHNESS, BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO KNOW THAT WE'VE LANDED. I KNOW YOU'VE GOT LOTS OF IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF TODAY."


NOT A PEEP! MAYBE THE OLD HOSE MONSTER HAS FINALLY FOUND SOMEBODY WHO CAN COOL HER DOWN. BUT NOW IT LOOKS LIKE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SOME EXECUTIVE DECISIONS AROUND HERE.
FOR STARTERS, YOU CAN GET YOUR BUTT OFF THE SHIP. BUT DON'T GO TOO FAR. IF I NEED YOU, I'LL BUZZ YOU AT THE PILOT'S LOUNGE.
THE CODE CLEARLY STATES THAT THE CAPTAIN SHALL REMAIN WITH THE CRAFT UNTIL PASSENGERS HAVE DISEMBARKED.
AND I CLEARLY STATED "SCRAM!"
LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT TO ORGANIZE TONIGHT'S *FESTIVITIES* ALL BY MY LONESOME. ALL THIS PLEASURE WON'T HAPPEN BY ITSELF.
THE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS, THE FLORIST, THE CADRE OF CONCUBINES FOR THE PREMIER...
...THE PHARMACY, THE LAUNDRY ROOM, THE BURIAL SQUAD! CRAP, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ALL THIS? I NEED A FLOXOL INJECTION!
I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO DELEGATE, DELEGATE, DELEGATE.

BREWSTER HERE. IT'S BEEN SEVERAL HOURS NOW. CRAFT NEEDS TO GET FUELED AND LUBED. IF I DON'T GET IT INTO THE HANGAR, THE FREON PIPES ARE GOING TO EXPLODE. YOUR NYMPHO BOSS NEEDS TO KNOW THAT HER SHIP IS IN DANGER. I'M GOING BACK UP THERE TO TELL HER MYSELF.
PERMISSION GRANTED, SUGARBUNS.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT PEOPLE THIS DECADENT WOULDN'T SHOW THEIR EQUIPMENT PROPER RESPECT.
I'M PUTTING IN FOR A TRANSFER AFTER THIS FLIGHT.
MS. DERRINGER, THIS IS CAPTAIN BREWSTER, DO YOU COPY? THE CRAFT MUST BE TAKEN TO THE HANGAR FOR AFTER-FLIGHT MAINTENANCE. FURTHER DELAY COULD RESULT IN SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE CRAFT.
WHAT GIVES? STILL NO RESPONSE, BUT ALL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS IN HER QUARTERS ARE STILL FULL TILT.
PERHAPS THEY'VE VACATED THE SHIP WITHOUT CLOSING DOWN THE CIRCUITS. I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST THEM.
HMM ...THAT SMELL...
BLORCH!
NO! IT CAN'T BE!

GHESHIZ!...
CHONCH


BREWSTER, DO YOU COPY? CHIGGERMAN, HERE. WHY CAN'T I GET AN ANSWER?
BREWSTER, PICK UP, DAMN IT! WHAT KIND OF MERGER ARE YOU HATCHING IN THERE?
PAPPITY PAPPITY PAP!
BREWSTER, DO YOU COPY? I DON'T THINK YOU REALIZE THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION! IVY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THE LUXURY OF SLEEPING IN. SHE'S GOT A FULL DOCKET TODAY!
POPPITY POPPITY POP!
SEVERAL IMPORTANT INVESTORS ARE ARRIVING THIS AFTERNOON. HER PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS IMPERATIVE!
IF YOU WANT ANY-THING DONE, YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT YOURSELF!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, BABY!

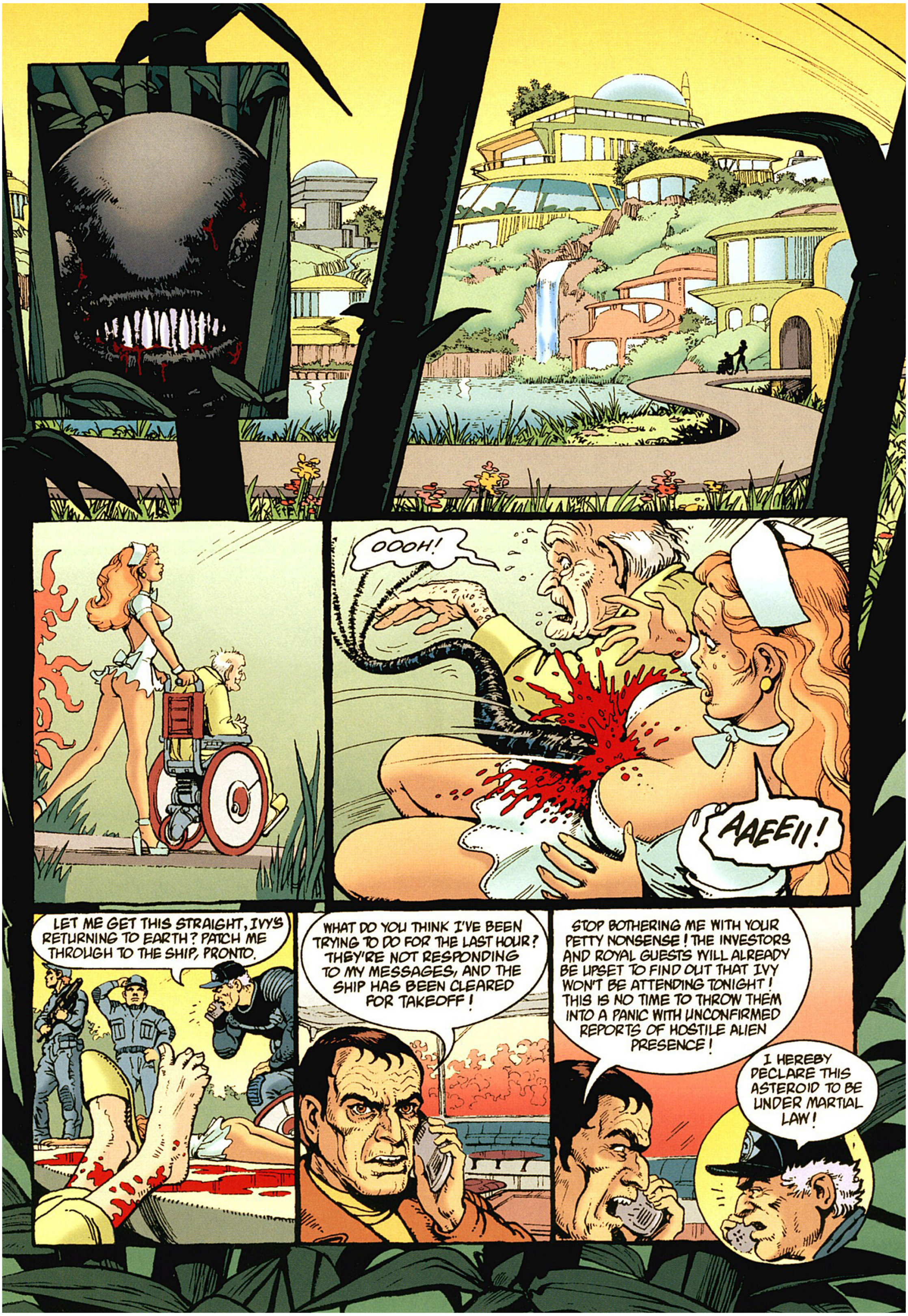
YUCK! IF IVY SAW THIS MESS, HEADS WOULD ROLL. I MUST HAVE THE CREW HOSE THIS DOWN.
WHAT IS THIS PINK STUFF?
EEEK! NO WONDER HE ISN'T RETURNING HIS CALLS!
OMIGOD, IT'S COMING FROM IVY'S ROOM!
BLORCH! EEEYAHH! AM I NEXT?

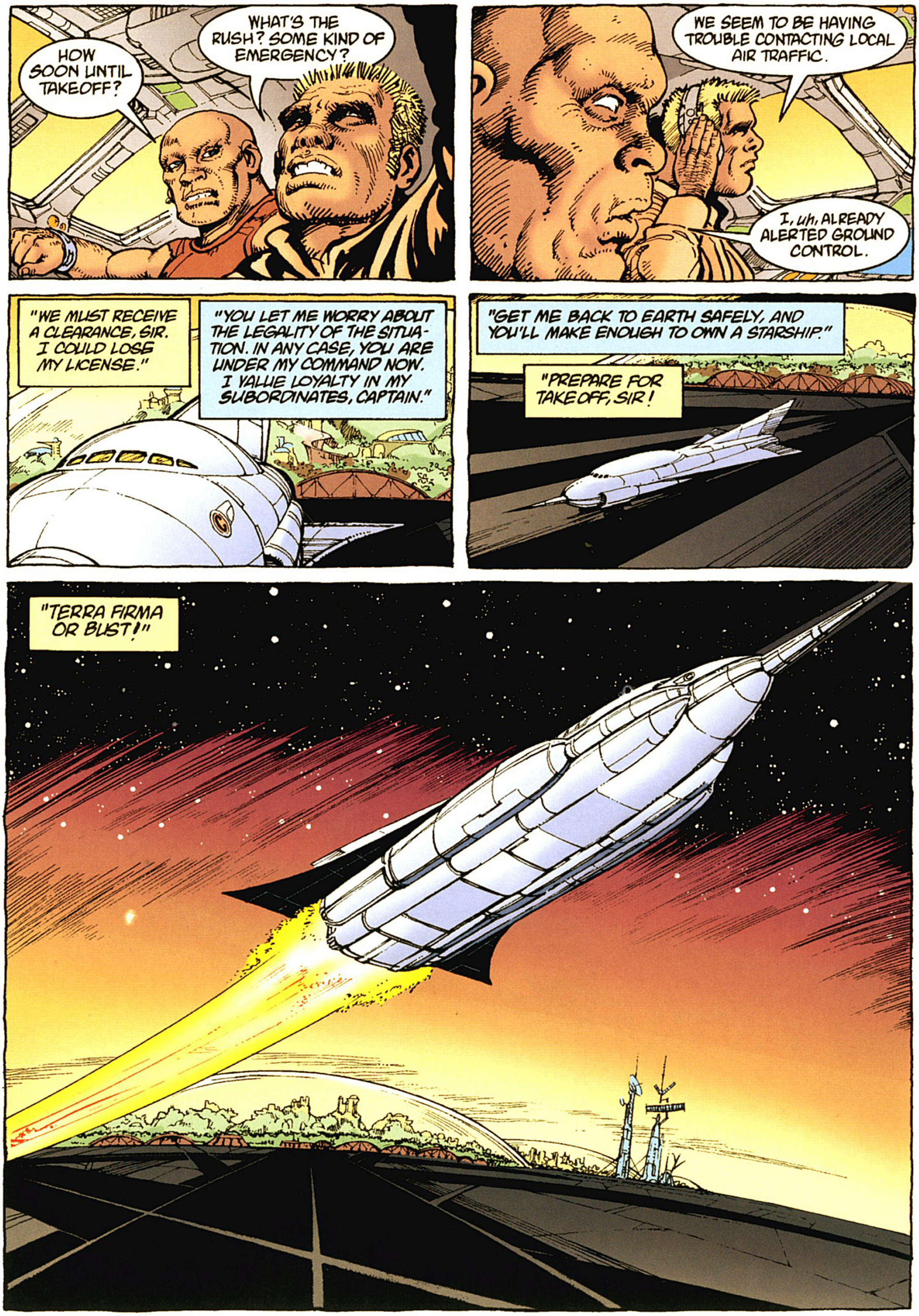
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE TERMS OF OUR CONTRACT SAY, IT JUST ISN'T FAIR!
HEY, WHO EVER SAID LIFE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FAIR?
THAT'S EXACTLY THE WAY THEY WANT US TO THINK. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO FEEL LUCKY JUST TO BE WORKIN' ON THIS HELLHOLE.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FRINGE BENEFITS? WHERE ELSE DO YOU GET TO BE WITH A DIFFERENT BABE EVERY NIGHT, FOR FREE?
YOU DUMB BUNNIES! THOSE ARE CASTOFFS! LAST YEAR'S MODELS!
TH-THEY ARE?
THE FACT IS, THEY'VE GOT US HOODWINKED. DON'T YOU GUYS REALIZE THAT THE WEALTHIEST GEEZERS ON EARTH COME HERE?!
I'M TAKIN' SOME OF THIS VINO BACK TO THE BARRACKS. IF THOSE GREEDY BASTARDS WHO WAIT ON THE TABLES WON'T SHARE THE WEALTH, WE OUGHTA HELP OURSELVES TO IT!
ARE YOU NUTS? YOU KNOW THE RULES FOR PILFERING HERE.
I'M SHAKIN' LIKE A LEAF.
VINO
1997
1998

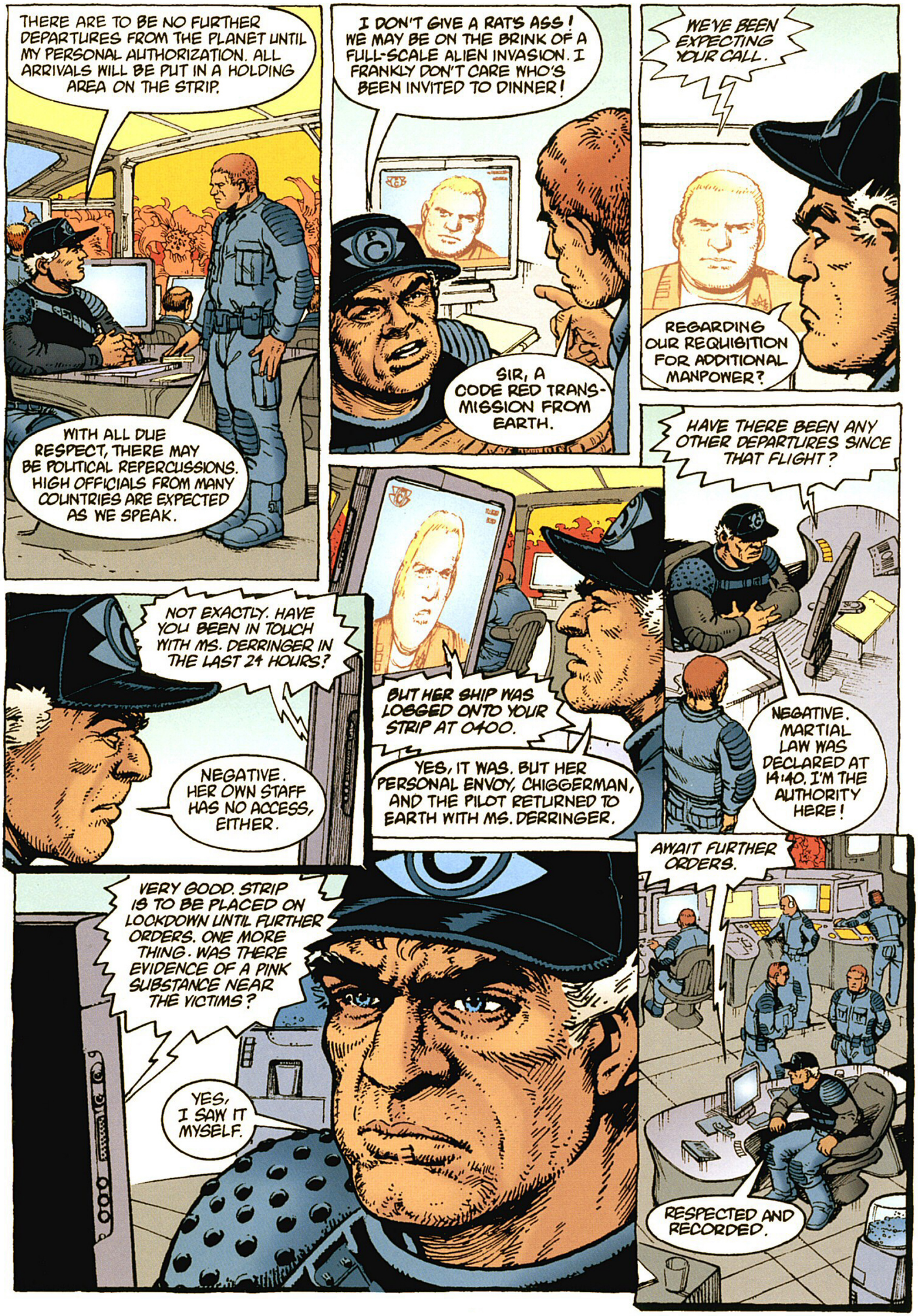
SSSSSSK
SLOTCH!
SPLASH
SGHOOOOK!
YOU SAY THIS HAPPENED LESS THAN TEN MINUTES AGO?
YEAH, WE GOT BLINDSIDED BY A LITTLE OCTOPUS.

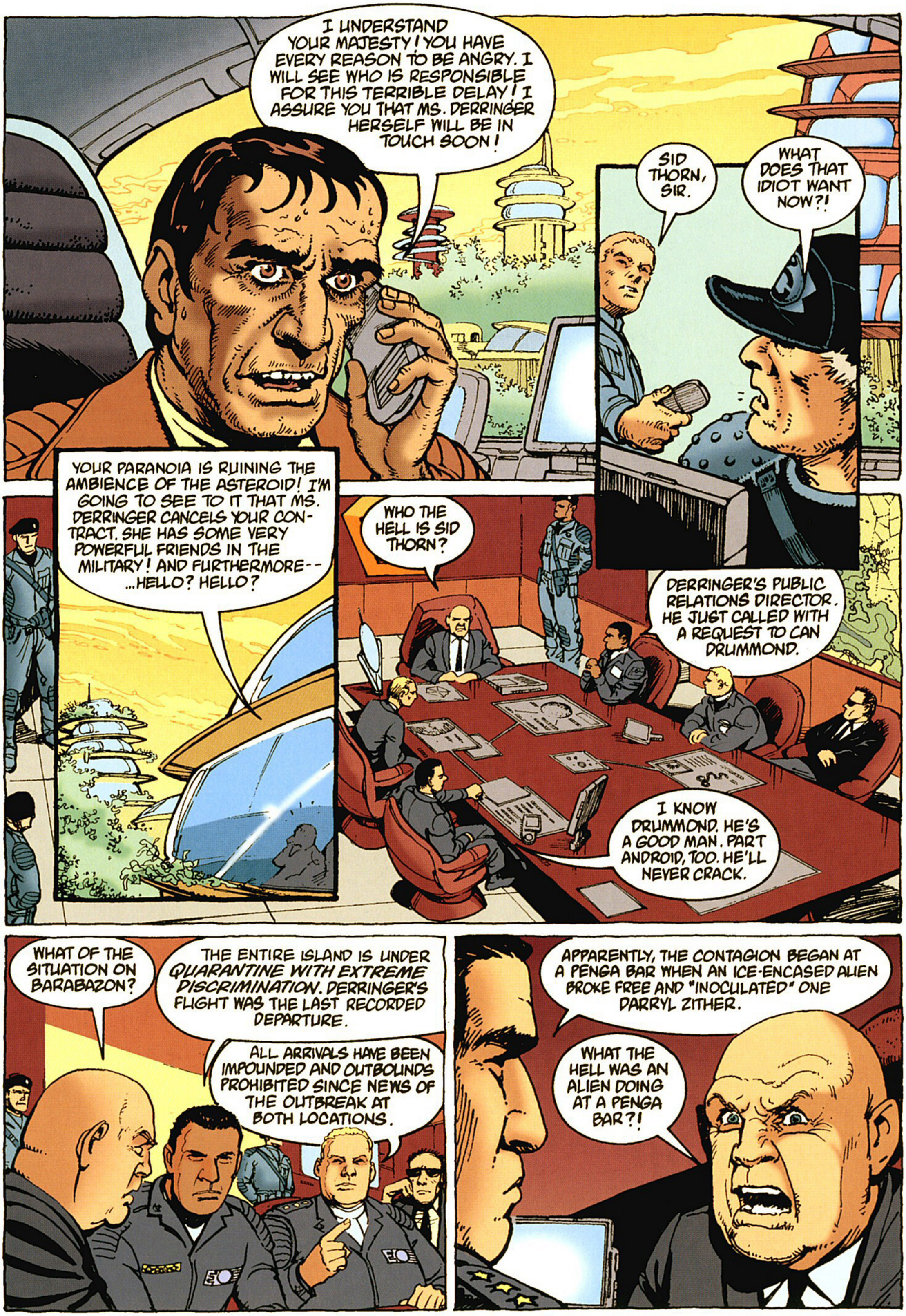
DEAR GOD, I HAVE TRIED TO LEAD A VIRTUOUS LIFE. IF MY SOUL IS TO BE TAKEN, I, uh, huh? THAT'S WEIRD...
THAT PINK STUFF TURNED TO DUST.
IT'S COMPLETELY GONE!
HAS ANYTHING UNUSUAL OCCURRED? ANY TROUBLE ON THE STRIP? OH, I WAS JUST CURIOUS.
THERE'S BEEN A LITTLE CHANGE OF PLANS. IVY NEEDS TO GET BACK TO EARTH PRONTO. WE NEED A FRESH PILOT, TOO. SHE WASN'T HAPPY WITH BREWSTER'S DISEMBARKING THE SHIP WITHOUT HER PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.
AAAGHH...

COMMANDER TENNYSON REPORTING FOR DUTY, SIR. IT'S AN HONOR TO BE PILOTING MS. DERRINGER'S PERSONAL CRAFT.
I'LL LET HER KNOW. PREPARE THIS SHIP FOR IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE FOR EARTH.
WE NEED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THIS IS AN ISOLATED INCIDENT OR IF WE CAN EXPECT A FULL-SCALE ATTACK. MUSTER ALL AVAILABLE MANPOWER ASAP.
BUT SIR, WE ARE ALREADY STRETCHED TOO THIN. IVY HAS REQUISITIONED MOST OF OUR BOYS FOR BANQUET DUTY TONIGHT.
I UNDERSTAND THAT HER LADYSHIP IS INCOMMUNICADO. IN LIEU OF HER PRESENCE, I'M THE ONE WHO DECIDES WHAT GOES ON AROUND HERE. REQUISITION A PLATOON FROM EARTH IMMEDIATELY!
YES, SIR!
TAKE A COUPLE DOZEN BOYS OFF BANQUET DUTY AND SEND THEM TO MY HEADQUARTERS FOR AN EMERGENCY BRIEFING!
LOOKS LIKE THE OCTOPUS HEADED INTO ORCHID FOREST!
FORGET THE EMERGENCY BRIEFING! DISPATCH THEM DIRECTLY HERE FOR A SEARCH AND DESTROY MISSION!
YES, SIR!


OOOH!
AAEEII!
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, IVY'S RETURNING TO EARTH? PATCH ME THROUGH TO THE SHIP, PRONTO.
WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DO FOR THE LAST HOUR? THEY'RE NOT RESPONDING TO MY MESSAGES, AND THE SHIP HAS BEEN CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF!
STOP BOTHERING ME WITH YOUR PETTY NONSENSE! THE INVESTORS AND ROYAL GUESTS WILL ALREADY BE UPSET TO FIND OUT THAT IVY WON'T BE ATTENDING TONIGHT! THIS IS NO TIME TO THROW THEM INTO A PANIC WITH UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF HOSTILE ALIEN PRESENCE!
I HEREBY DECLARE THIS ASTEROID TO BE UNDER MARTIAL LAW!


HOW SOON UNTIL TAKEOFF?
WHAT'S THE RUSH? SOME KIND OF EMERGENCY?
WE SEEM TO BE HAVING TROUBLE CONTACTING LOCAL AIR TRAFFIC.
I, uh, ALREADY ALERTED GROUND CONTROL.
"WE MUST RECEIVE A CLEARANCE, SIR. I COULD LOSE MY LICENSE."
"YOU LET ME WORRY ABOUT THE LEGALITY OF THE SITUATION. IN ANY CASE, YOU ARE UNDER MY COMMAND NOW. I VALUE LOYALTY IN MY SUBORDINATES, CAPTAIN."
"GET ME BACK TO EARTH SAFELY, AND YOU'LL MAKE ENOUGH TO OWN A STARSHIP."
"PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF, SIR!
"TERRA FIRMA OR BUST!"

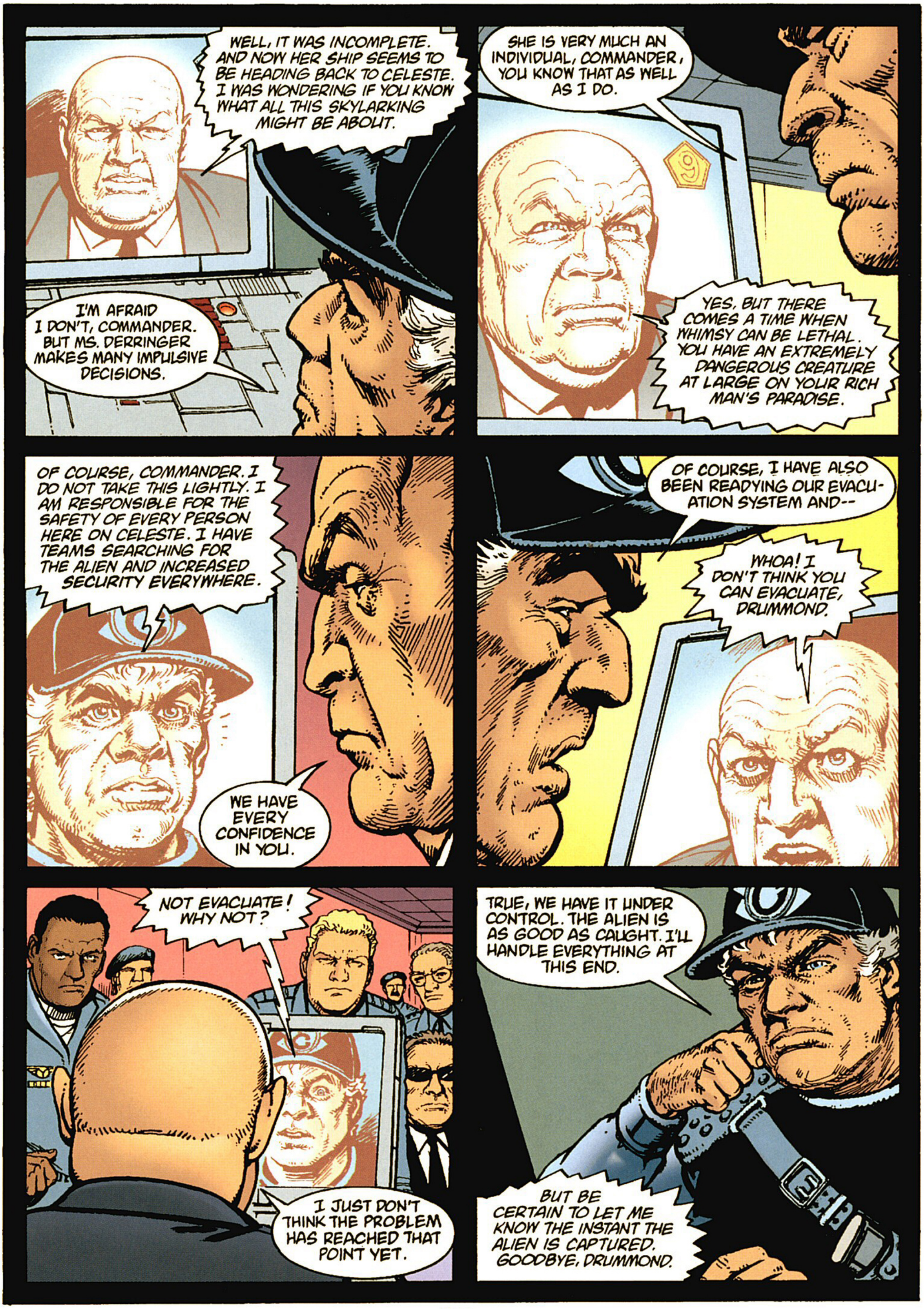

THERE ARE TO BE NO FURTHER DEPARTURES FROM THE PLANET UNTIL MY PERSONAL AUTHORIZATION. ALL ARRIVALS WILL BE PUT IN A HOLDING AREA ON THE STRIP.
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, THERE MAY BE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS. HIGH OFFICIALS FROM MANY COUNTRIES ARE EXPECTED AS WE SPEAK.
I DON'T GIVE A RAT'S ASS! WE MAY BE ON THE BRINK OF A FULL-SCALE ALIEN INVASION. I FRANKLY DON'T CARE WHO'S BEEN INVITED TO DINNER!
SIR, A CODE RED TRANS-MISSION FROM EARTH.
WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOUR CALL.
REGARDING OUR REQUISITION FOR ADDITIONAL MANPOWER?
NOT EXACTLY. HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MS. DERRINGER IN THE LAST 24 HOURS?
NEGATIVE. HER OWN STAFF HAS NO ACCESS, EITHER.
BUT HER SHIP WAS LOGGED ONTO YOUR STRIP AT 0400.
YES, IT WAS. BUT HER PERSONAL ENVOY, CHIGGERMAN, AND THE PILOT RETURNED TO EARTH WITH MS. DERRINGER.
HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OTHER DEPARTURES SINCE THAT FLIGHT?
NEGATIVE. MARTIAL LAW WAS DECLARED AT 14:40. I'M THE AUTHORITY HERE!
VERY GOOD. STRIP IS TO BE PLACED ON LOCKDOWN UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS. ONE MORE THING. WAS THERE EVIDENCE OF A PINK SUBSTANCE NEAR THE VICTIMS?
YES, I SAW IT MYSELF.
AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS.
RESPECTED AND RECORDED.


I UNDERSTAND YOUR MAJESTY! YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE ANGRY. I WILL SEE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TERRIBLE DELAY! I ASSURE YOU THAT MS. DERRINGER HERSELF WILL BE IN TOUCH SOON!
SID THORN, SIR.
WHAT DOES THAT IDIOT WANT NOW?!
YOUR PARANOIA IS RUINING THE AMBIENCE OF THE ASTEROID! I'M GOING TO SEE TO IT THAT MS. DERRINGER CANCELS YOUR CONTRACT. SHE HAS SOME VERY POWERFUL FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY! AND FURTHERMORE-- ...HELLO? HELLO?
WHO THE HELL IS SID THORN?
DERRINGER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR. HE JUST CALLED WITH A REQUEST TO CAN DRUMMOND.
I KNOW DRUMMOND. HE'S A GOOD MAN. PART ANDROID, TOO. HE'LL NEVER CRACK.
WHAT OF THE SITUATION ON BARABAZON?
THE ENTIRE ISLAND IS UNDER *QUARANTINE WITH EXTREME DISCRIMINATION*. DERRINGER'S FLIGHT WAS THE LAST RECORDED DEPARTURE.
ALL ARRIVALS HAVE BEEN IMPOUNDED AND OUTBOUNDS PROHIBITED SINCE NEWS OF THE OUTBREAK AT BOTH LOCATIONS.
APPARENTLY, THE CONTAGION BEGAN AT A PENGA BAR WHEN AN ICE-ENCASED ALIEN BROKE FREE AND "INOCULATED" ONE DARRYL ZITHER.
WHAT THE HELL WAS AN ALIEN DOING AT A PENGA BAR?!

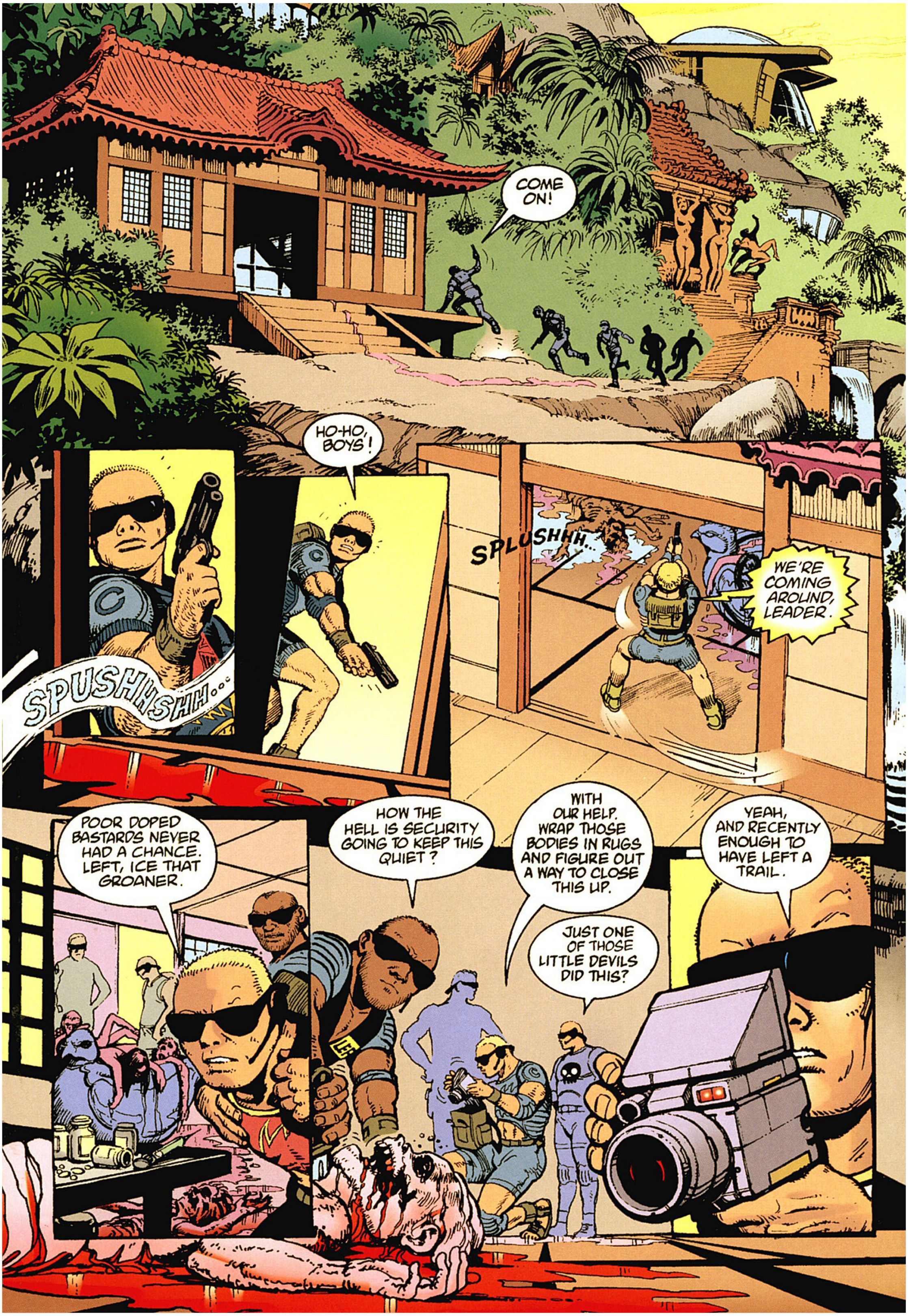
WE HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FIRST INCIDENT. WE ARE CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH THE AFTERMATH.
EXPLAIN.
APPARENTLY, THIS PARTICULAR ALIEN CARRIES A CONTAGION. WE ARE CERTAIN THAT IT IS SPREAD THROUGH A PINK FLUID WHICH IT SECRETES. AFTER DRYING, IT TURNS TO POWDER, AND BECOMES AIRBORNE.
EVEN TRACE ELEMENTS OF THE SUBSTANCE SECRETED BY THIS MICROORGANISM ARE LETHAL TO MAN.
SHOP
ENRICO'S of Celeste
I HEARD A RUMOR THAT IVY IS ATTENDING TONIGHT WITH THAT DREADFUL DARRYL ZITHER.
THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS PLACE. YOU JUST NEVER KNOW *WHO* WILL DROP IN!
ENRICO'S of Celeste

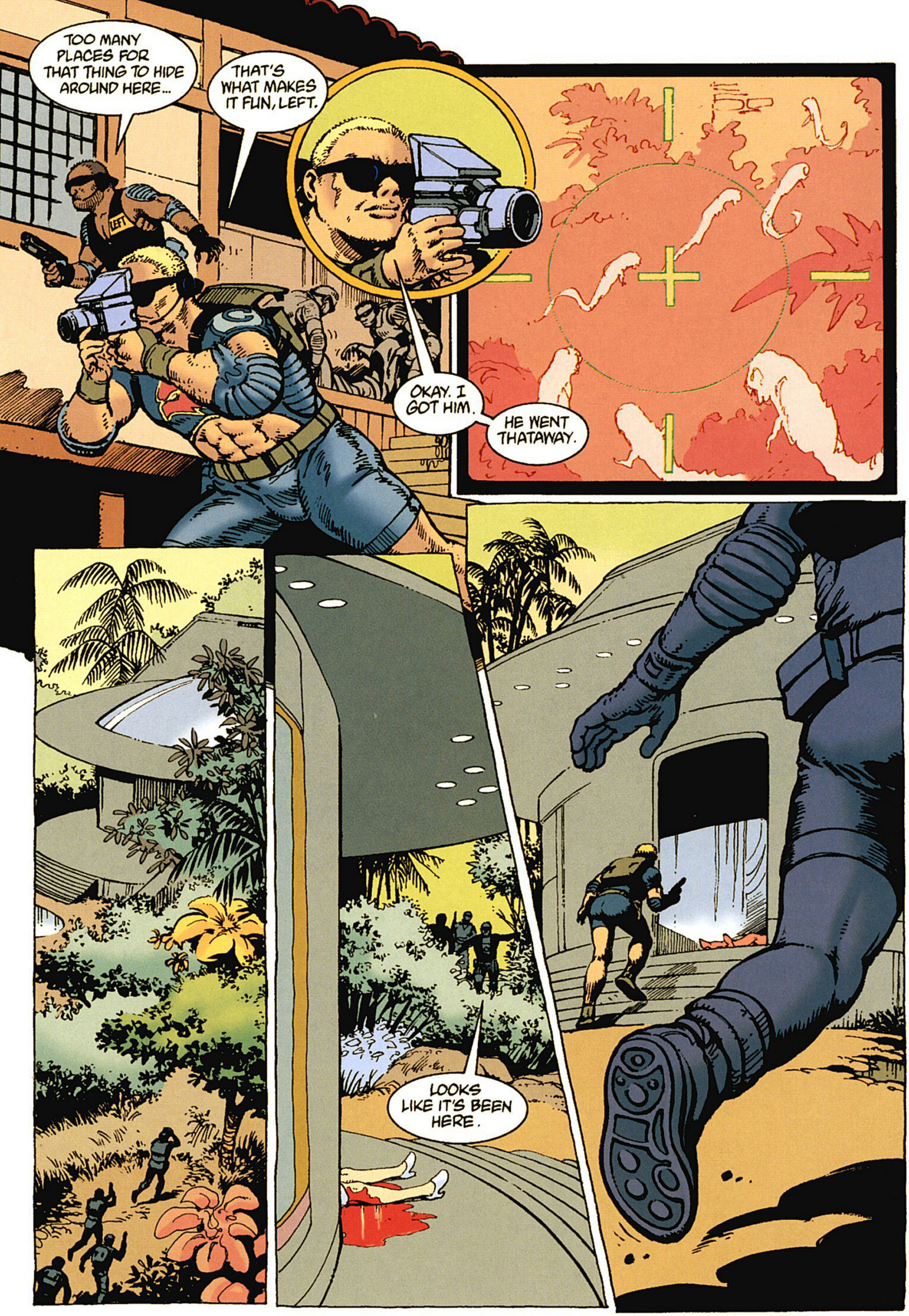
MR. CHIGGERMAN! STOP THIS TOMFOOLERY IMMEDIATELY OR I'M RETURNING THIS SHIP TO CELESTE!
SO SORRY. SORRY? HAHAHA
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? AS COMMANDER OF THIS SHIP, I AM AUTHORIZED TO PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST!
STICKLER! YOU OLD LIKE A GREASY BIRD!
BZAPF!
YOU FOOL!
MEANINGLESS!
BZAT!

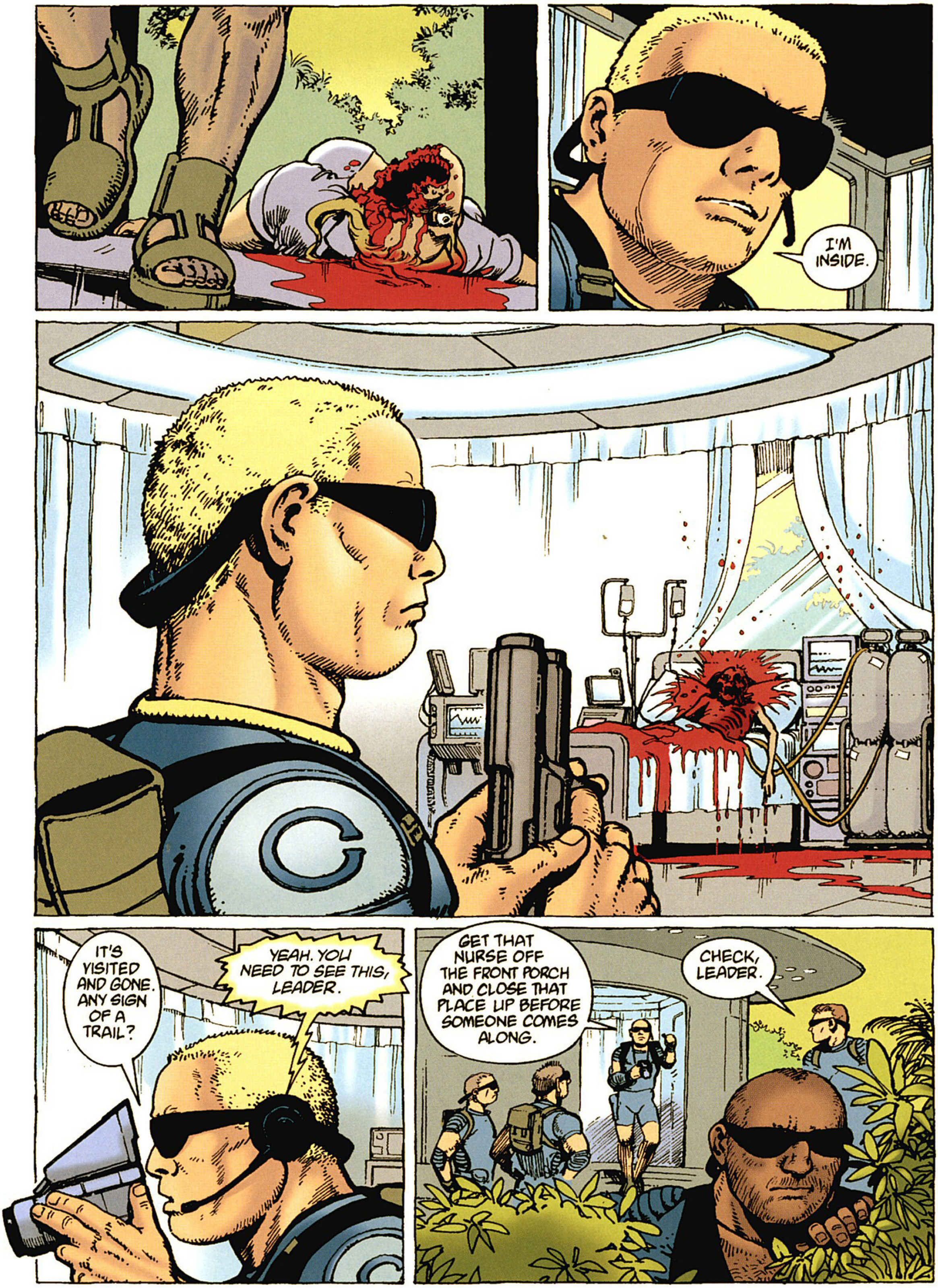
HHHHHHSK!
EEYAAHHH!
DIRECTOR DRUMMOND?
HELLO, COMMANDER.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, DRUMMOND. WE JUST RECEIVED AN ERRATIC TRANSMISSION FROM MS. DERRINGER'S EARTHBOUND SHIP.
ERRATIC OR EROTIC?

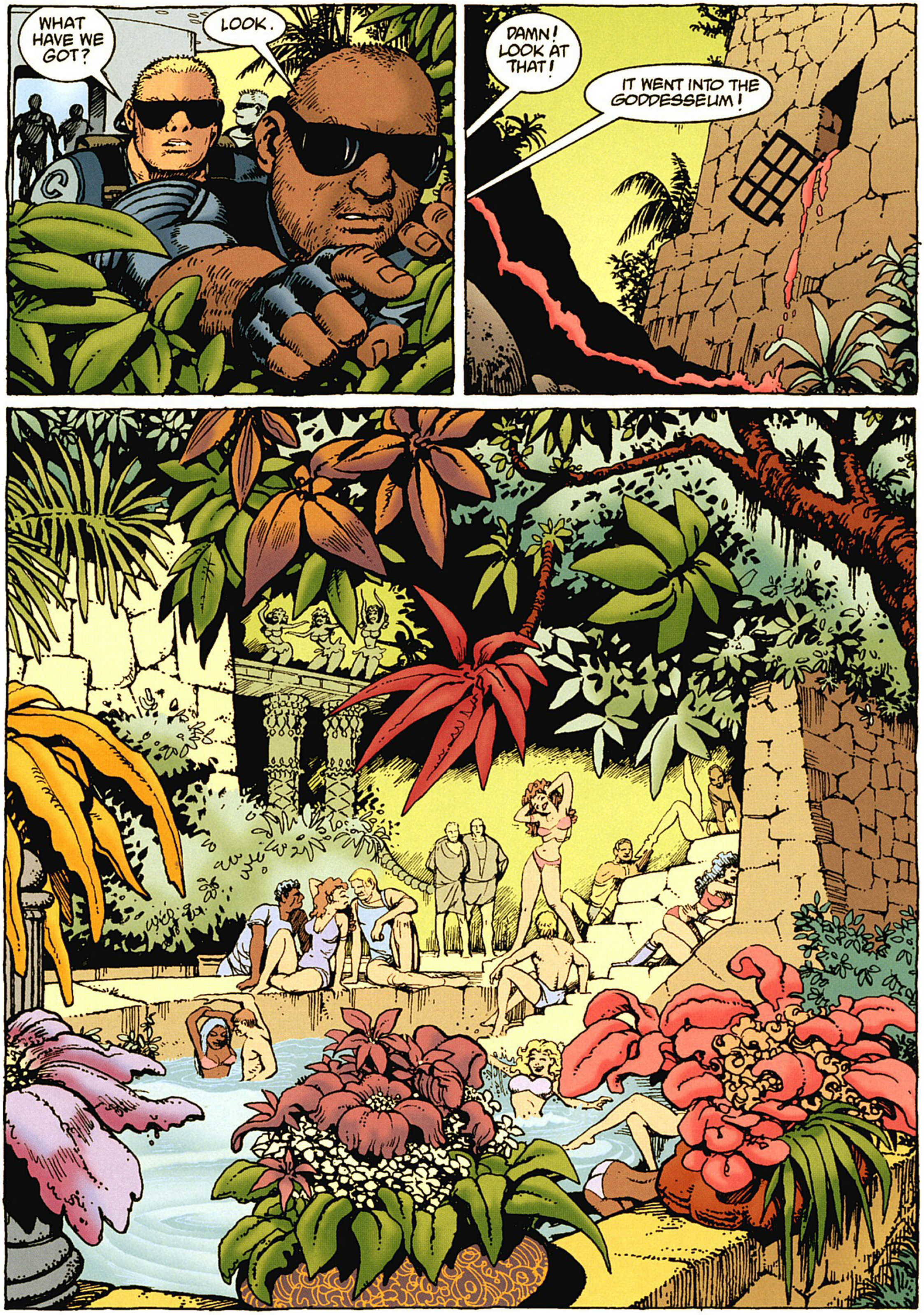

WELL, IT WAS INCOMPLETE. AND NOW HER SHIP SEEMS TO BE HEADING BACK TO CELESTE. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU KNOW WHAT ALL THIS SKYLARKING MIGHT BE ABOUT.
I'M AFRAID I DON'T, COMMANDER. BUT MS. DERRINGER MAKES MANY IMPULSIVE DECISIONS.
SHE IS VERY MUCH AN INDIVIDUAL, COMMANDER, YOU KNOW THAT AS WELL AS I DO.
YES, BUT THERE COMES A TIME WHEN WHIMSY CAN BE LETHAL. YOU HAVE AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS CREATURE AT LARGE ON YOUR RICH MAN'S PARADISE.
OF COURSE, COMMANDER. I DO NOT TAKE THIS LIGHTLY. I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF EVERY PERSON HERE ON CELESTE. I HAVE TEAMS SEARCHING FOR THE ALIEN AND INCREASED SECURITY EVERYWHERE.
WE HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE IN YOU.
OF COURSE, I HAVE ALSO BEEN READYING OUR EVACUATION SYSTEM AND--
WHOA! I DON'T THINK YOU CAN EVACUATE, DRUMMOND.
NOT EVACUATE! WHY NOT?
I JUST DON'T THINK THE PROBLEM HAS REACHED THAT POINT YET.
TRUE, WE HAVE IT UNDER CONTROL. THE ALIEN IS AS GOOD AS CAUGHT. I'LL HANDLE EVERYTHING AT THIS END.
BUT BE CERTAIN TO LET ME KNOW THE INSTANT THE ALIEN IS CAPTURED. GOODBYE, DRUMMOND.

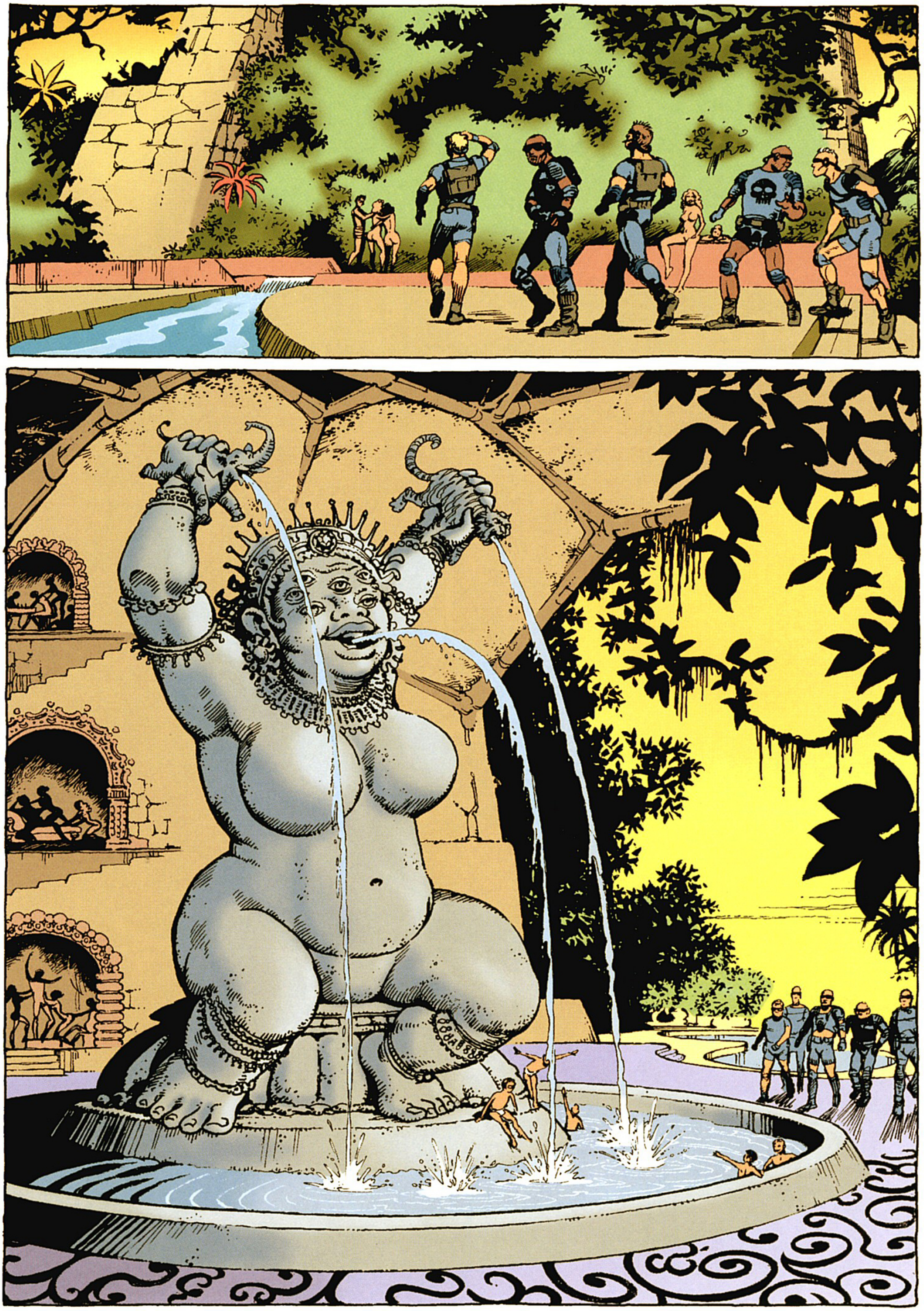
OVER HERE.
WHAT IS THAT?
NASTY-LOOKING GOB O' CRAP, AIN'T IT?
LEADER
LEFT
DOWN
LISTEN.
SLUSSHPSH

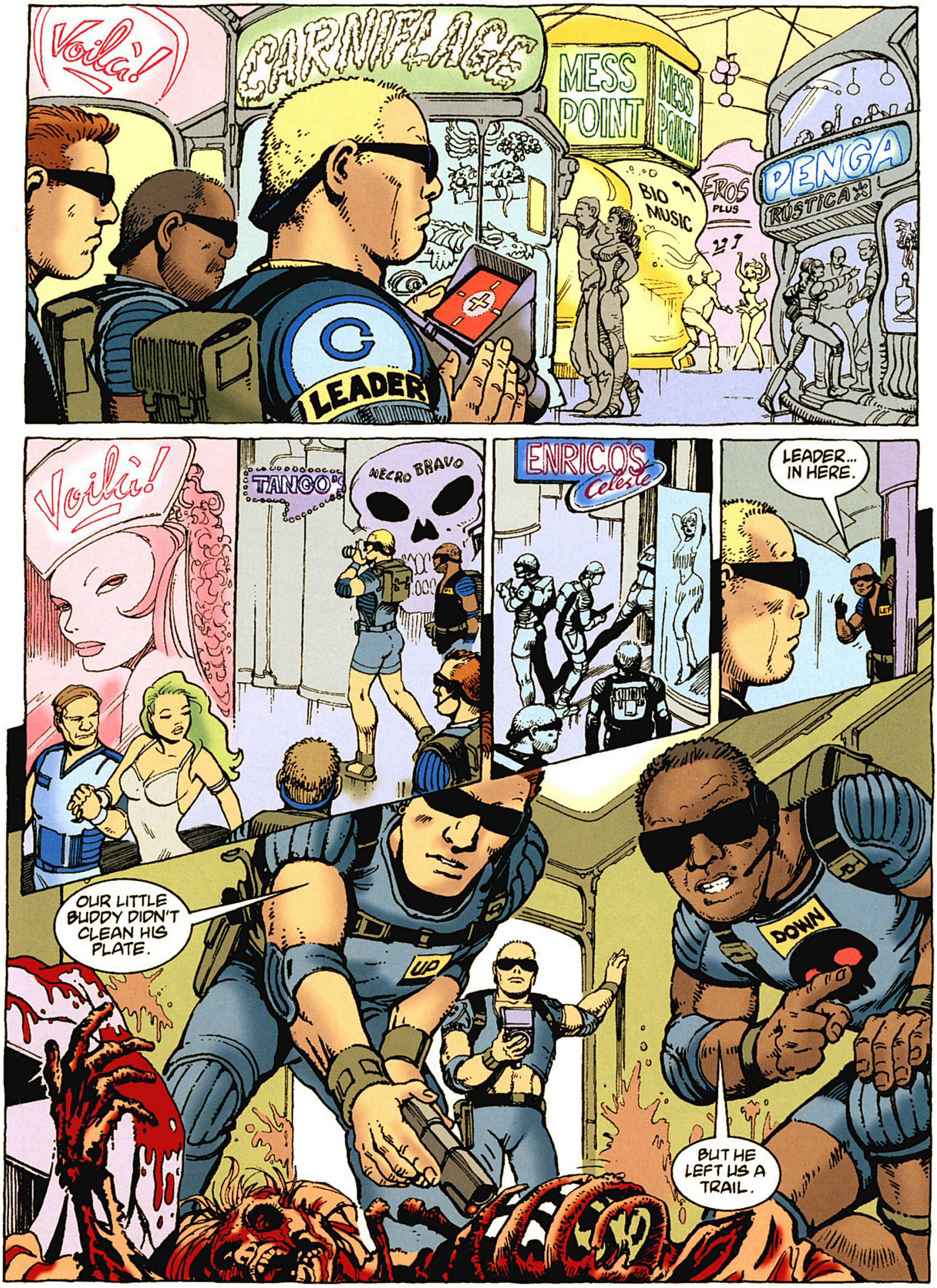

COME ON!
HO-HO, BOYS!
SPUSHHSHH...
SPLUSHHH...
WE'RE COMING AROUND, LEADER.
POOR DOPED BASTARDS NEVER HAD A CHANCE. LEFT, ICE THAT GROANER.
HOW THE HELL IS SECURITY GOING TO KEEP THIS QUIET?
WITH OUR HELP. WRAP THOSE BODIES IN RUGS AND FIGURE OUT A WAY TO CLOSE THIS UP.
JUST ONE OF THOSE LITTLE DEVILS DID THIS?
YEAH, AND RECENTLY ENOUGH TO HAVE LEFT A TRAIL.


TOO MANY PLACES FOR THAT THING TO HIDE AROUND HERE...
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT FUN, LEFT.
OKAY. I GOT HIM.
HE WENT THATAWAY.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN HERE.

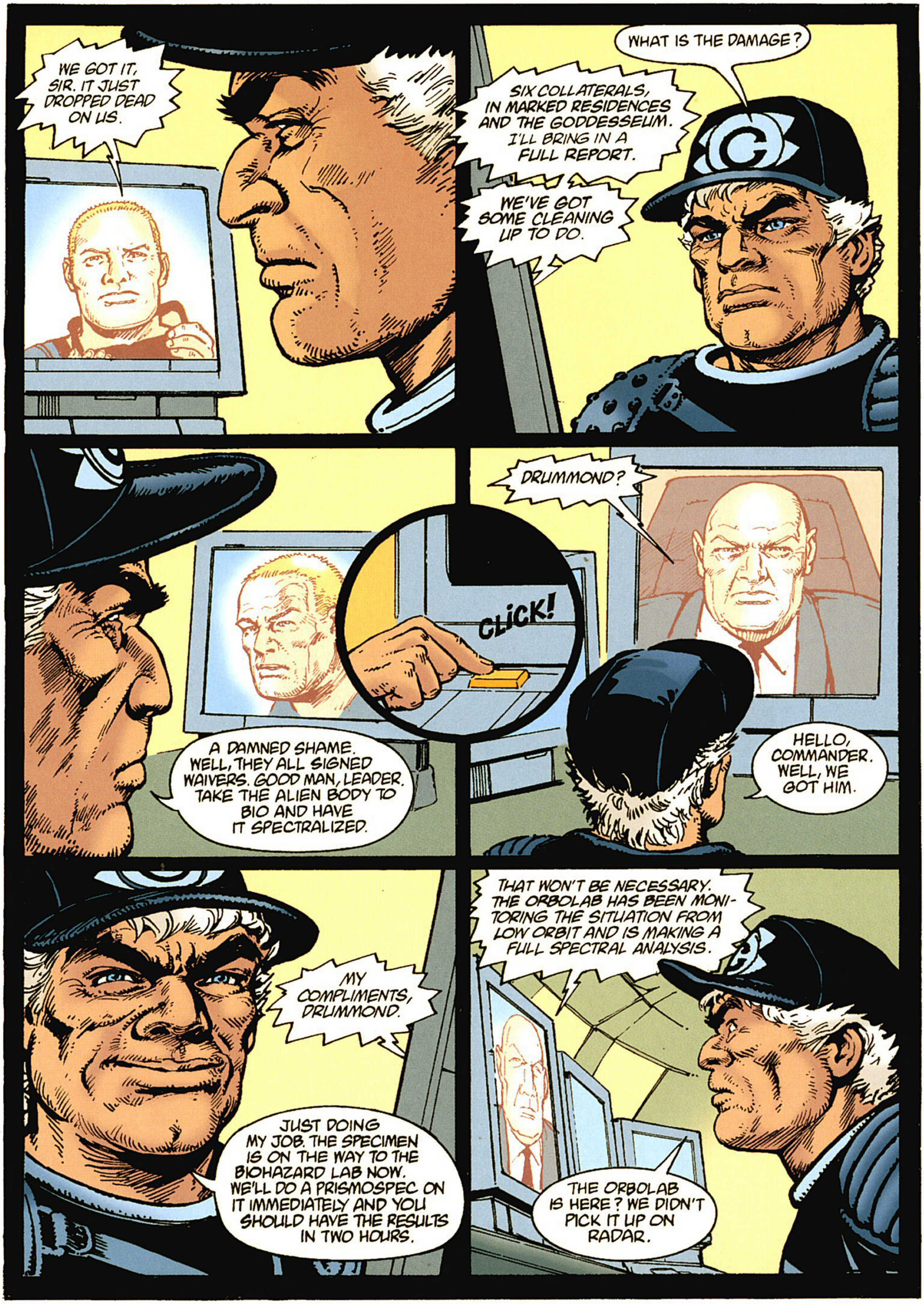

I'M INSIDE.
IT'S VISITED AND GONE. ANY SIGN OF A TRAIL?
YEAH. YOU NEED TO SEE THIS, LEADER.
GET THAT NURSE OFF THE FRONT PORCH AND CLOSE THAT PLACE UP BEFORE SOMEONE COMES ALONG.
CHECK, LEADER.

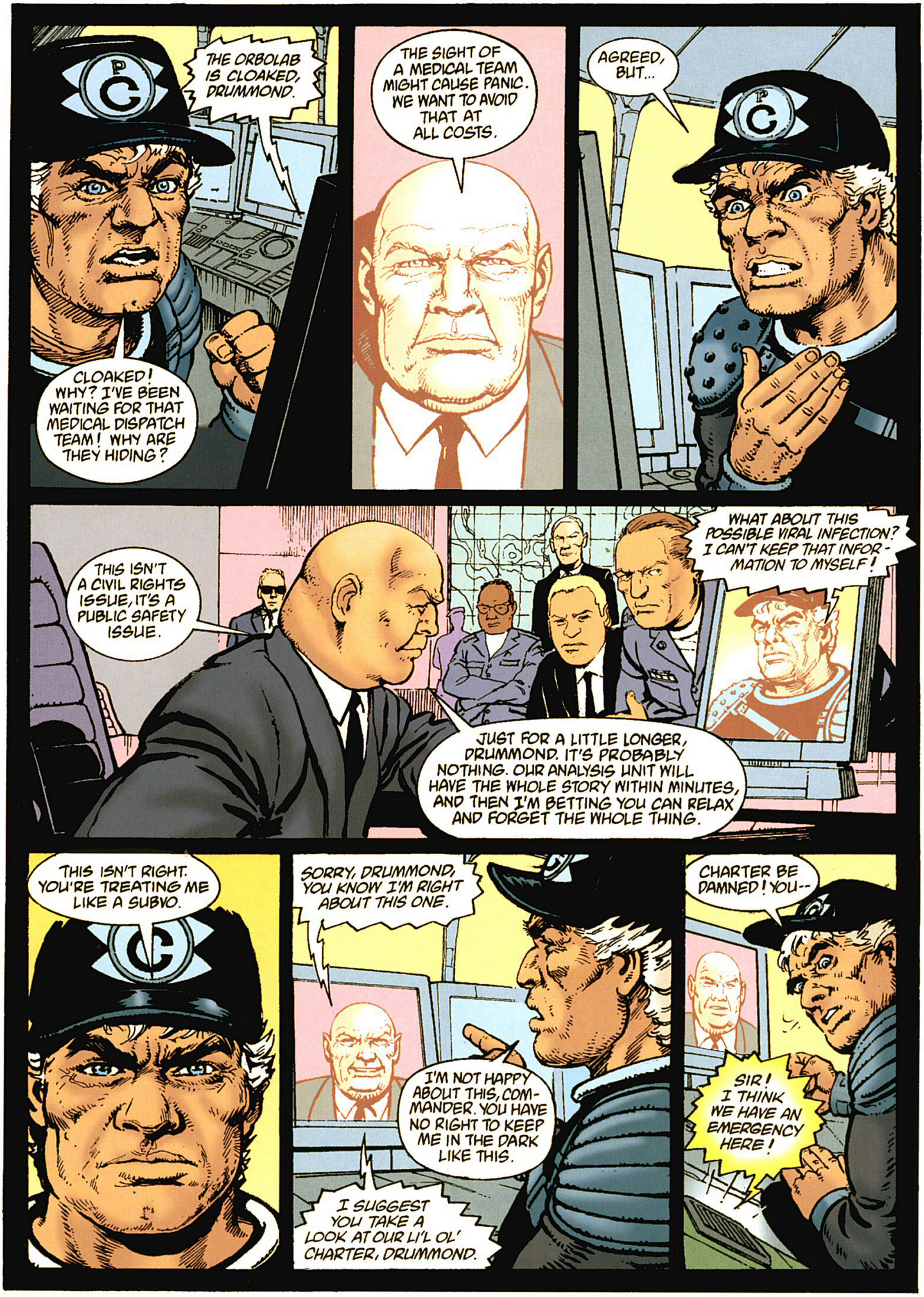

WHAT HAVE WE GOT?
LOOK.
DAMN! LOOK AT THAT!
IT WENT INTO THE GODDESSEUM!




Voilà!
CARNIFLAGE
MESS POINT
MESS POINT
BIO MUSIC
EROS PLUS
PENGA
RUSTICA
LEADER
Voilà!
TANGO'S
NECRO BRAVO
ENRICO'S
Celeste
LEADER... IN HERE.
OUR LITTLE BUDDY DIDN'T CLEAN HIS PLATE.
UP
DOWN
BUT HE LEFT US A TRAIL.

UGS:
THIS WAY.
DERMA ELSE
DERMA ELSE
THE TRAIL GOES IN HERE AND IT'S FRESH!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
EXTERMINATORS, MA'AM. HAVE YOU BEEN HERE LONG TODAY?
I JUST CAME ON DUTY... I THOUGHT I SMELLED SOMETHING.
YES MA'AM. YOU'LL HAVE TO CLOSE DOWN THE SHOP FOR AN HOUR OR TWO.

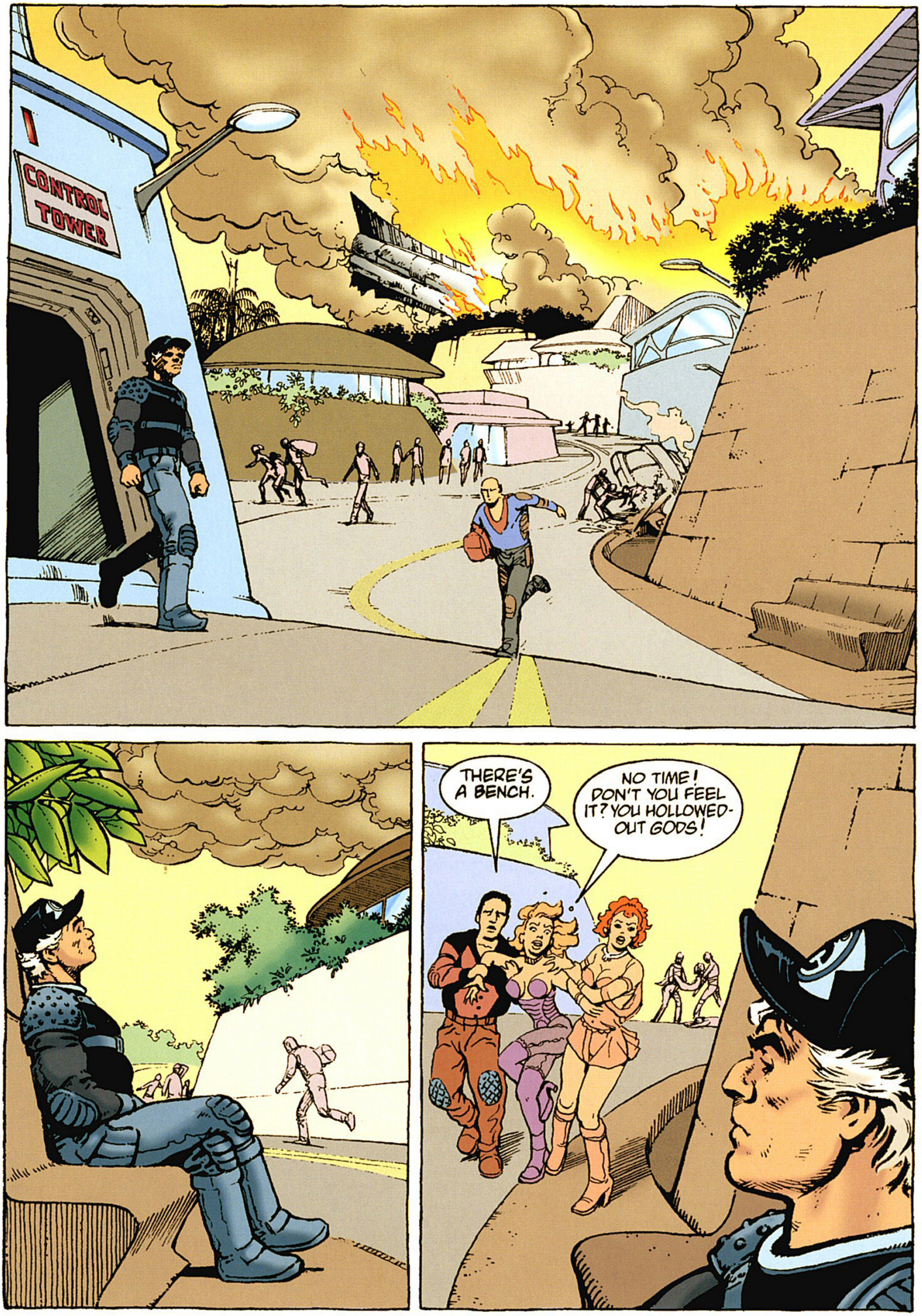

WE GOT IT, SIR. IT JUST DROPPED DEAD ON US.
WHAT IS THE DAMAGE?
SIX COLLATERALS, IN MARKED RESIDENCES AND THE GODDESSEUM. I'LL BRING IN A FULL REPORT.
WE'VE GOT SOME CLEANING UP TO DO.
A DAMNED SHAME. WELL, THEY ALL SIGNED WAIVERS. GOOD MAN, LEADER. TAKE THE ALIEN BODY TO BIO AND HAVE IT SPECTRALIZED.
CLICK!
DRUMMOND?
HELLO, COMMANDER. WELL, WE GOT HIM.
MY COMPLIMENTS, DRUMMOND.
JUST DOING MY JOB. THE SPECIMEN IS ON THE WAY TO THE BIOHAZARD LAB NOW. WE'LL DO A PRISMOSPEC ON IT IMMEDIATELY AND YOU SHOULD HAVE THE RESULTS IN TWO HOURS.
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. THE ORBOLAB HAS BEEN MONI-TORING THE SITUATION FROM LOW ORBIT AND IS MAKING A FULL SPECTRAL ANALYSIS.
THE ORBOLAB IS HERE? WE DIDN'T PICK IT UP ON RADAR.

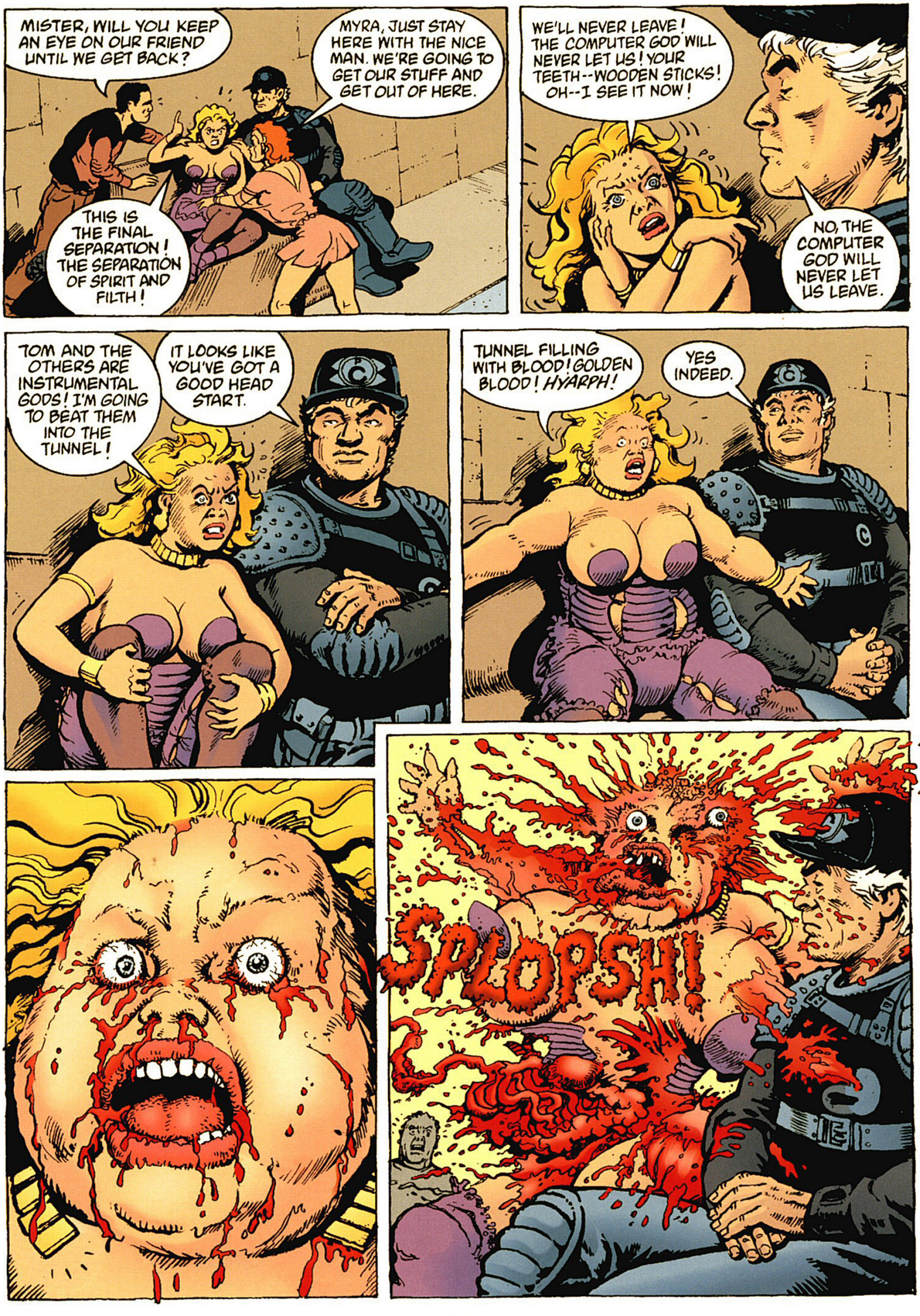

THE ORBOLAB IS CLOAKED, DRUMMOND.
CLOAKED! WHY? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THAT MEDICAL DISPATCH TEAM! WHY ARE THEY HIDING?
THE SIGHT OF A MEDICAL TEAM MIGHT CAUSE PANIC. WE WANT TO AVOID THAT AT ALL COSTS.
AGREED, BUT...
WHAT ABOUT THIS POSSIBLE VIRAL INFECTION? I CAN'T KEEP THAT INFORMATION TO MYSELF!
THIS ISN'T A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE, IT'S A PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE.
JUST FOR A LITTLE LONGER, DRUMMOND. IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING. OUR ANALYSIS UNIT WILL HAVE THE WHOLE STORY WITHIN MINUTES, AND THEN I'M BETTING YOU CAN RELAX AND FORGET THE WHOLE THING.
THIS ISN'T RIGHT. YOU'RE TREATING ME LIKE A SUBVO.
SORRY, DRUMMOND, YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT ABOUT THIS ONE.
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT THIS, COMMANDER. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP ME IN THE DARK LIKE THIS.
I SUGGEST YOU TAKE A LOOK AT OUR LI'L OL' CHARTER, DRUMMOND.
CHARTER BE DAMNED! YOU--
SIR! I THINK WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY HERE!

ONE MOMENT, COMMANDER. WHAT IS IT, ANGUS?
MS. DERRINGER'S SHIP IS COMING IN NOW, SIR, AND IT APPEARS TO BE ABOUT TO CRASH IN THIS SECTOR!
I SEE IT! WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING?
BETTER DUCK AND COVER, SIR!
CHUNCH!
SMRASH
KRSMUSRSH!

WHOOOOM!!
IVY'S SHIP JUST CRASH-LANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POLYZONE!
YES, I HEARD. THAT'S PRETTY ROUGH, DRUMMOND.
ROUGH? ROUGH?!
HOWEVER, IT COULD BE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.
YOU'RE INSANE! I'M STARTING THE EVACUATION PROCESS IMMEDIATELY! CELESTE IS FINISHED!
I DON'T THINK YOU CAN EVACUATE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S IMPERATIVE! ANYWAY, AFTER THE CRASH, PEOPLE WILL LEAVE ON THEIR OWN!
THEY BETTER NOT. ANYONE WHO TRIES TO DISEMBARK FROM CELESTE WITHOUT CLEARANCE WILL BE FIRED UPON. IS THAT CLEAR?
WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO BE THE BEARER OF BAD TIDINGS, BUT WE HAVE THE ORBOLAB'S FINDINGS ON YOUR ALIEN.
IT'S BEEN INFECTED WITH A CLASS TEN VIRUS.
CLASS TEN?
YES. IF IT'S ANY COMFORT, YOU AREN'T THE ONLY ONES. WE HAD TO NUKE BARABAZON.
IT'S NO COMFORT.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW I'M SORRY. THE END WILL COME QUICKLY. THREE DEVICES IN JUST ABOUT TEN MINUTES.
TEN MINUTES. HUH. THINK OF THAT.
AGAIN I'M SORRY, DRUMMOND.
IF THERE IS AN AFTERLIFE FOR ANDROIDS I HOPE YOURS IS A HAPPY ONE. I'LL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR FINAL MOMENTS.
DIRECTOR DRUMMOND, I HAVE ALL EMERGENCY SYSTEMS ON ALERT BUT I DON'T THINK WE CAN CONTAIN THAT FIRE!
NO, PROBABLY NOT. OH, WELL! TELL THE OFFICE THEY CAN HAVE THE AFTERNOON OFF.
ARE YOU JOKING, SIR?
NO.


CONTROL TOWER
THERE'S A BENCH.
NO TIME! DON'T YOU FEEL IT? YOU HOLLOWED-OUT GODS!


MISTER, WILL YOU KEEP AN EYE ON OUR FRIEND UNTIL WE GET BACK?
MYRA, JUST STAY HERE WITH THE NICE MAN. WE'RE GOING TO GET OUR STUFF AND GET OUT OF HERE.
THIS IS THE FINAL SEPARATION! THE SEPARATION OF SPIRIT AND FILTH!
WE'LL NEVER LEAVE! THE COMPUTER GOD WILL NEVER LET US! YOUR TEETH--WOODEN STICKS! OH--I SEE IT NOW!
NO, THE COMPUTER GOD WILL NEVER LET US LEAVE.
TOM AND THE OTHERS ARE INSTRUMENTAL GODS! I'M GOING TO BEAT THEM INTO THE TUNNEL!
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEAD START.
TUNNEL FILLING WITH BLOOD! GOLDEN BLOOD! HYARPH!
YES INDEED.
SPLOPSH!

MYRA!?
HERE THEY COME.

KIDNAPPED

script

JIM WOODRING and **JUSTIN GREEN**

art

FRANCISCO SOLANO LOPEZ

colors

CHRIS CHALENOR

lettering

CLEM ROBINS

title illustration

KILIAN PLUNKETT

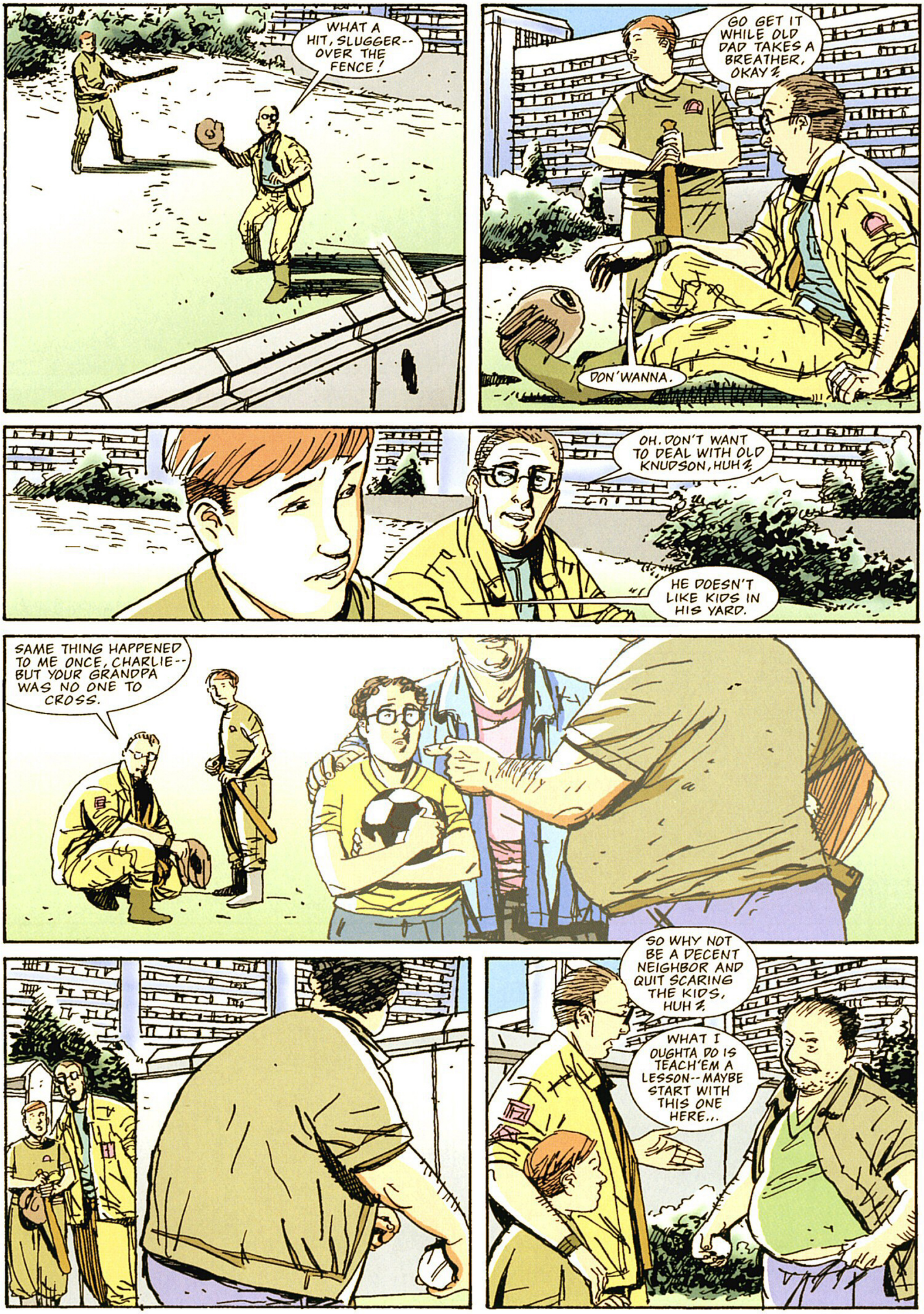
KILL 'EM! KILL 'EM! KILL 'EM!

WATCH OUT, THOMPSON!
NO.. UGH.. NO!
HSSSSSSSS
THOUGHT YOU HAD ME, DIDN'T YOU?
WELL... SURPRISE!

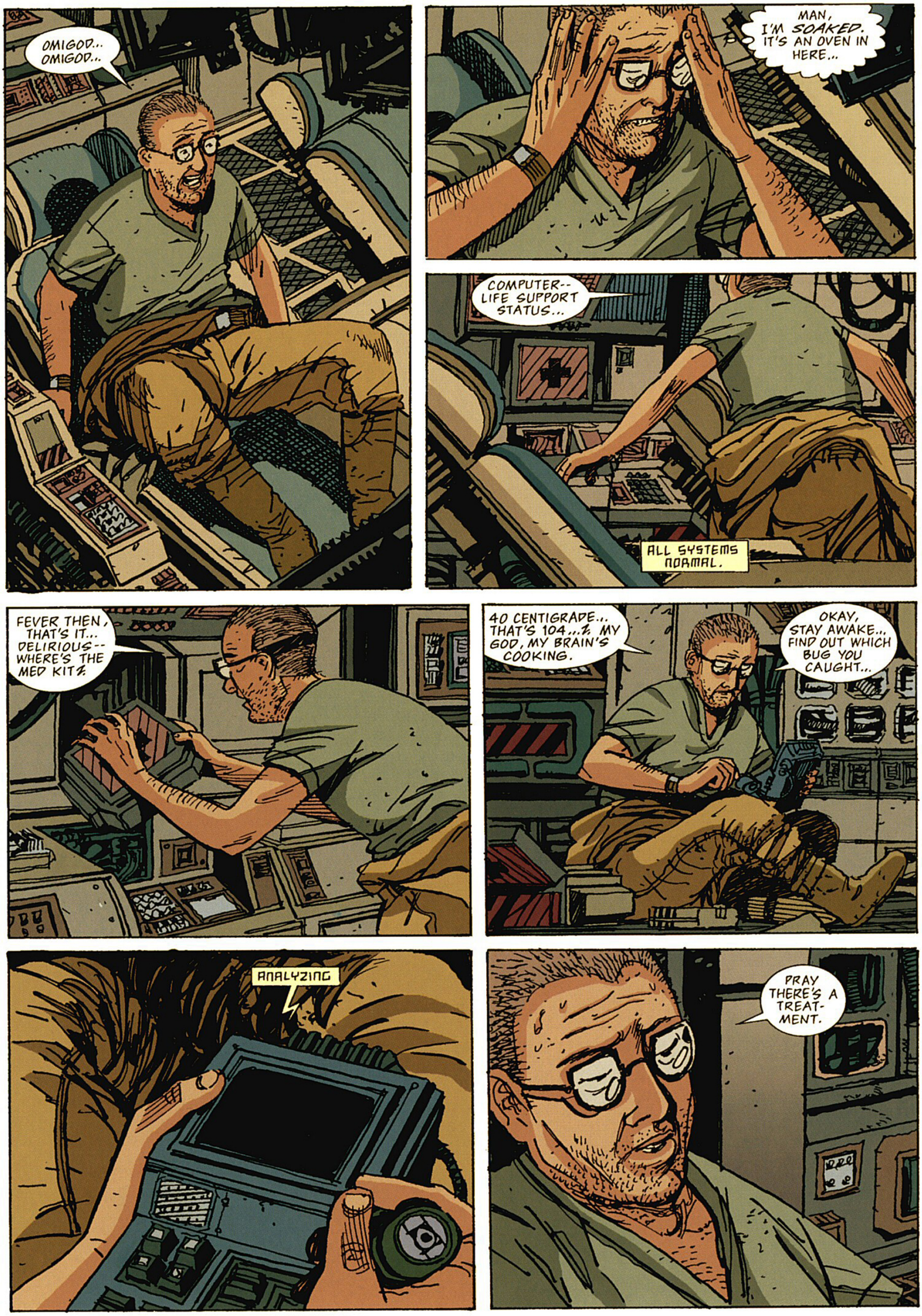
SUR...
GAAAA...

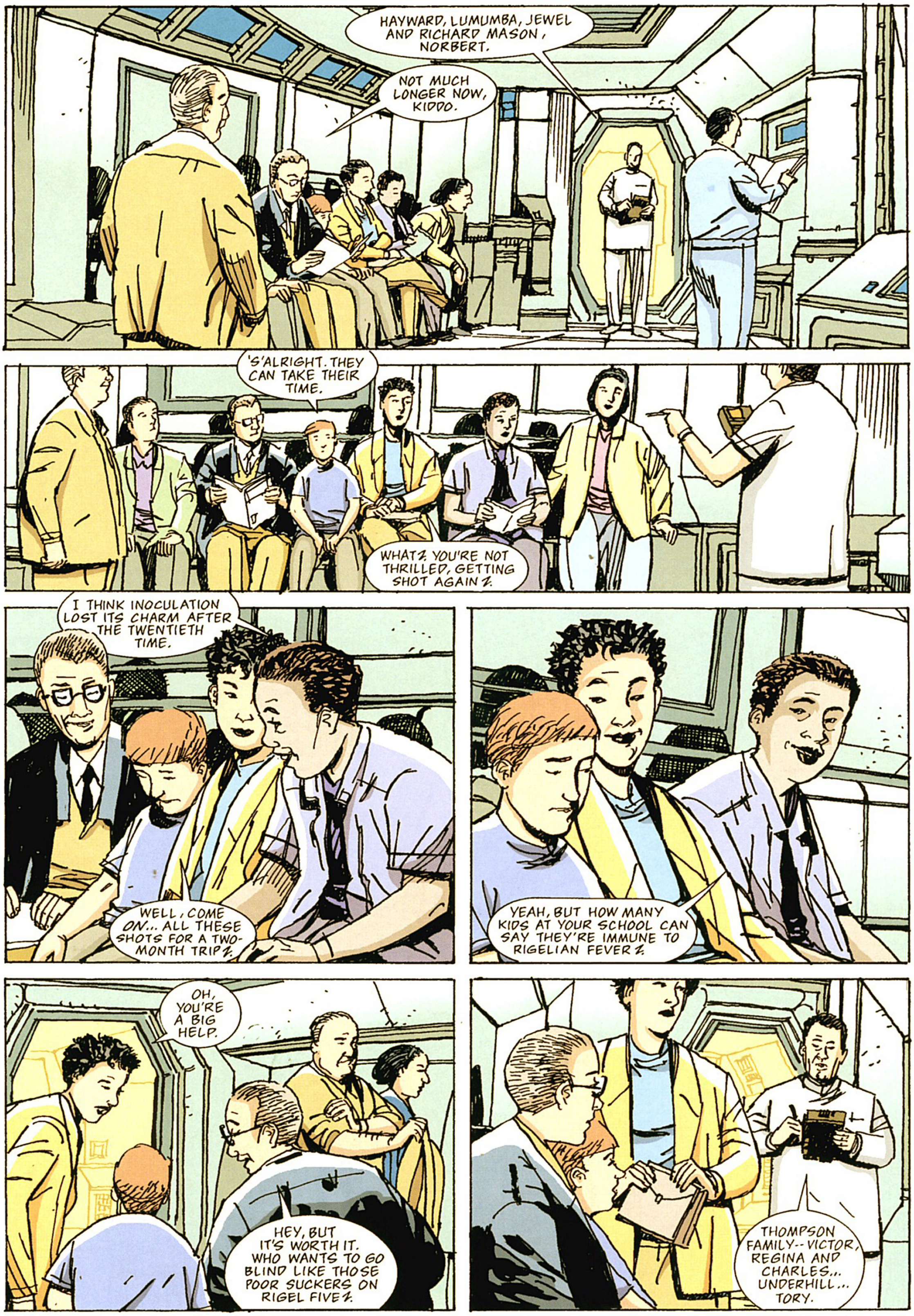
...AAAAH!
GOD--BLOODY MESS...
JUST WHAT I NEED... HAVE GINA CATCH ME EATING S-RATIONS ON THE COUCH... ROLLING IN CRUMBS...
GOOD JOB THE GRAV UNIT'S ON, OR WE'D ALL BE BREATHING 'EM, TOO--
STILL... BETTER BREATHING CRUMBS THAN BEING LUNCH.
GOOD ONE, DAD.

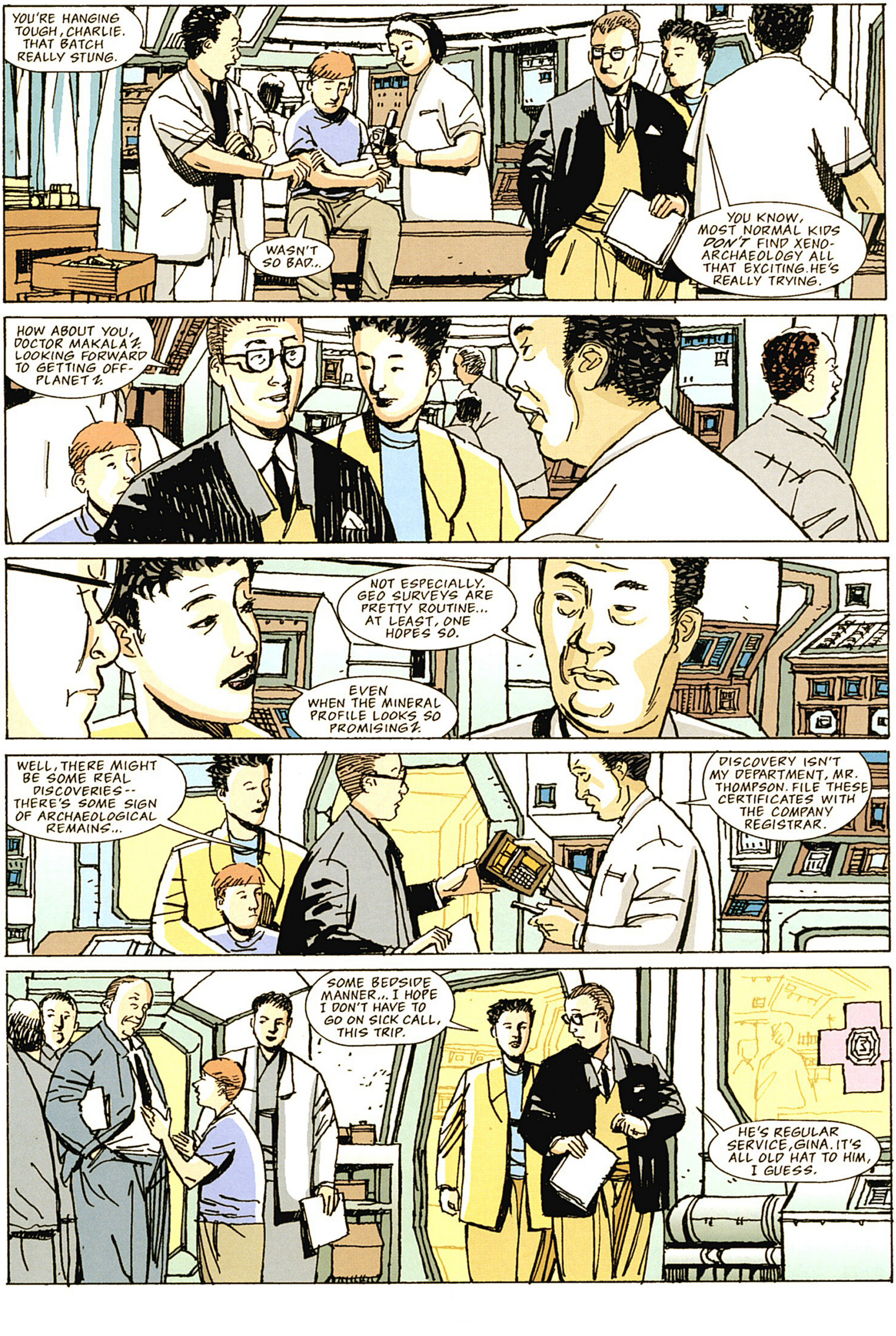
I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE, CHARLIE.
BIG SHOCK, THE WAY YOU SLEEP. HOW 'BOUT WE GET OUTTA HERE FOR A WHILE?
SURE-- ANXIOUS TO BREAK IN THAT NEW GLOVE, SON?
WELL, IT'S SURE A GREAT DAY FOR IT-- A DAY LIKE YOUR GREAT-GRANDPA MUST'VE KNOWN.
AW, NO HISTORY LESSON TODAY, DAD...
YOU'RE UP, KIDDO.

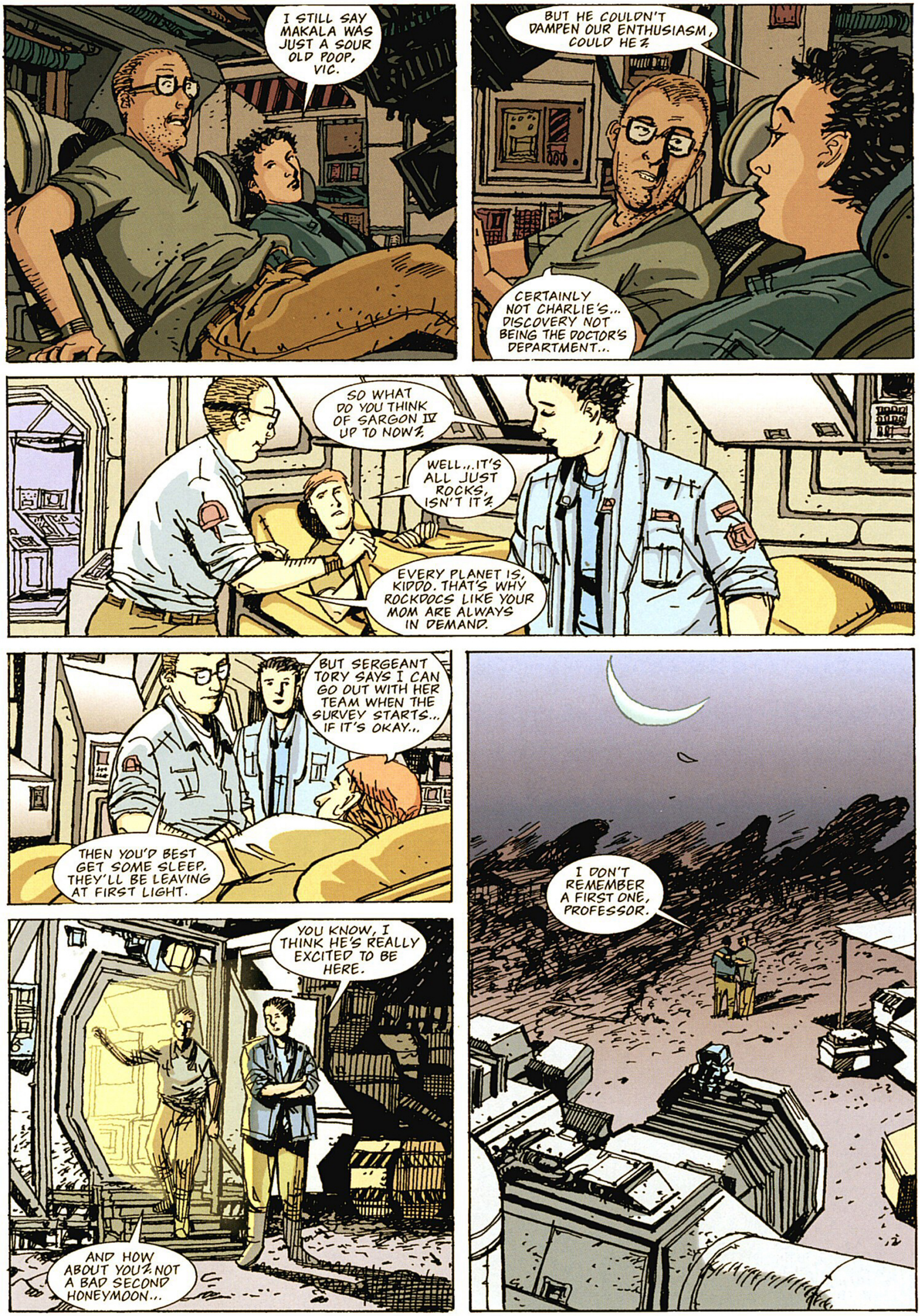

WHAT A HIT, SLUGGER-- OVER THE FENCE!
GO GET IT WHILE OLD DAD TAKES A BREATHER, OKAY?
DON'WANNA.
OH. DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH OLD KNUDSON, HUH?
HE DOESN'T LIKE KIDS IN HIS YARD.
SAME THING HAPPENED TO ME ONCE, CHARLIE-- BUT YOUR GRANDPA WAS NO ONE TO CROSS.
SO WHY NOT BE A DECENT NEIGHBOR AND QUIT SCARING THE KIDS, HUH?
WHAT I OUGHTA DO IS TEACH'EM A LESSON--MAYBE START WITH THIS ONE HERE...

I SAID, BACK OFF! YOU BOTHER MY BOY...
IF YOU WERE ANY KIND OF FATHER...
...YOU WOULDN'T LET HIM GO PLACES...
...WHERE HE'S GOT NO BUSINESSSSSSSSSSS
DAD! DAAAAAD...

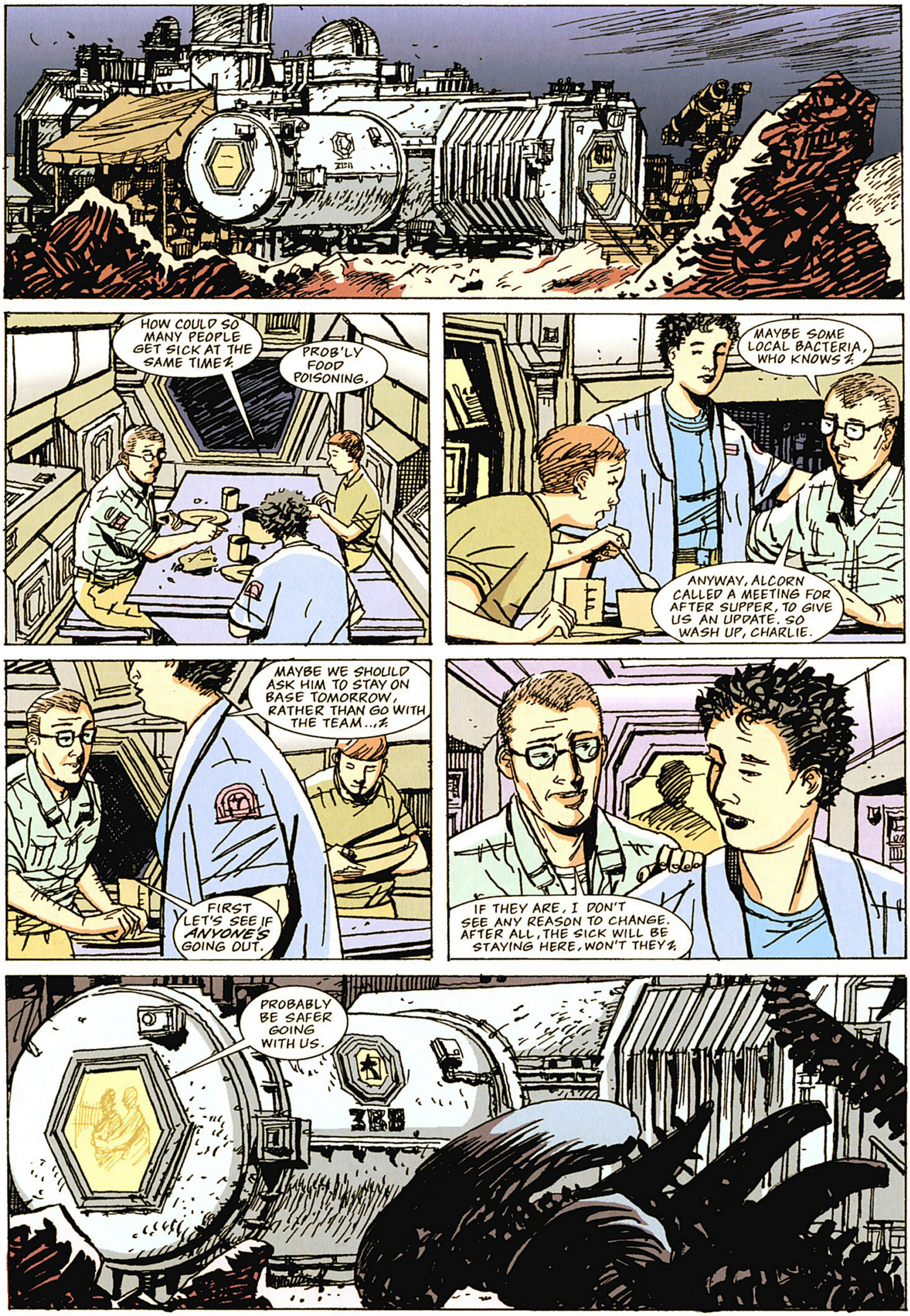

OMIGOD.. OMIGOD..
MAN, I'M SOAKED. IT'S AN OVEN IN HERE..
COMPUTER-- LIFE SUPPORT STATUS...
ALL SYSTEMS NORMAL.
FEVER THEN, THAT'S IT... DELIRIOUS-- WHERE'S THE MED KIT?
40 CENTIGRADE.. THAT'S 104...? MY GOD, MY BRAIN'S COOKING.
OKAY, STAY AWAKE... FIND OUT WHICH BUG YOU CAUGHT...
ANALYZING
PRAY THERE'S A TREATMENT.

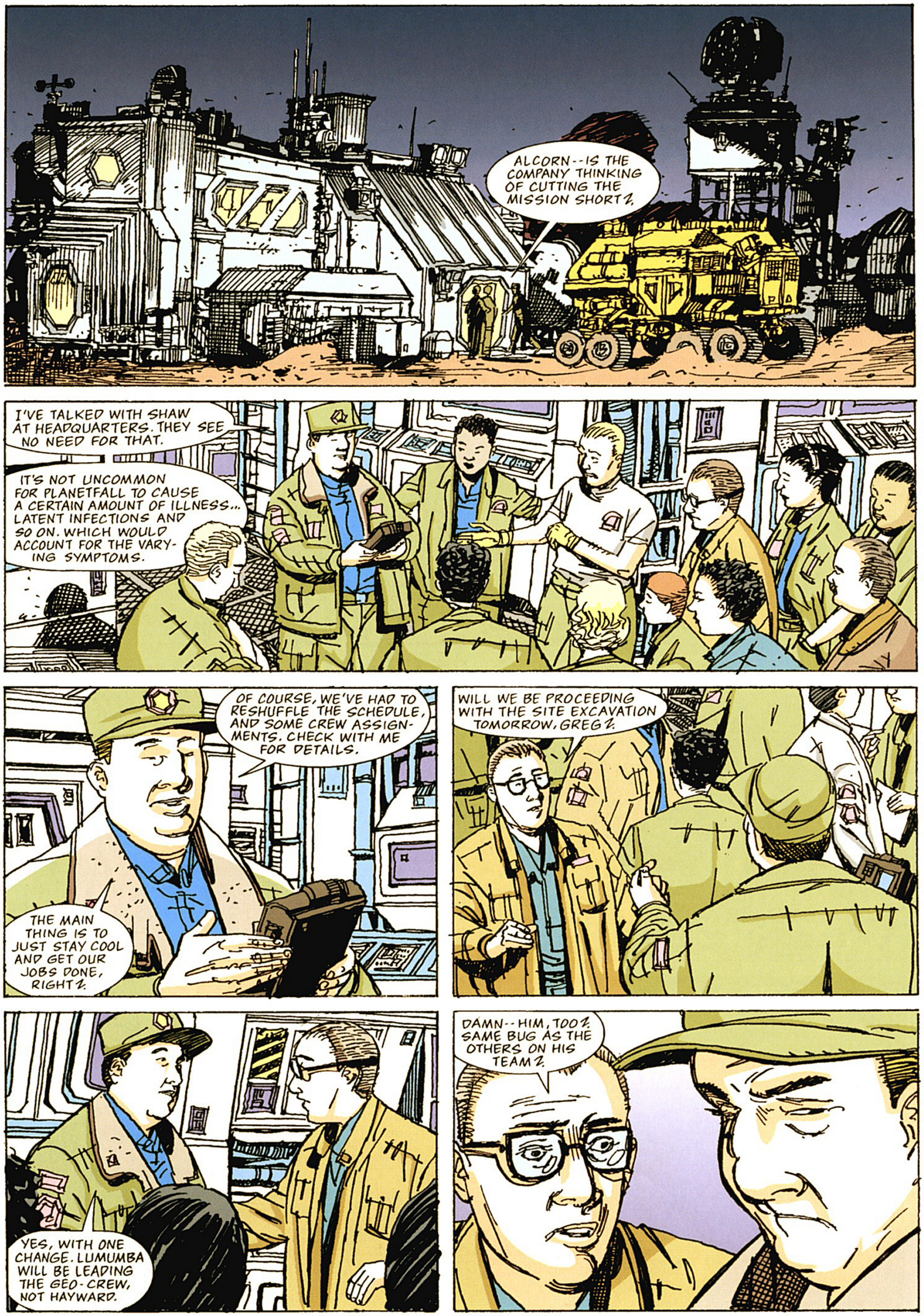

HAYWARD, LUMUMBA, JEWEL AND RICHARD MASON, NORBERT.
NOT MUCH LONGER NOW, KIDDO.
'S'ALRIGHT. THEY CAN TAKE THEIR TIME.
WHAT? YOU'RE NOT THRILLED, GETTING SHOT AGAIN?
I THINK INOCULATION LOST ITS CHARM AFTER THE TWENTIETH TIME.
WELL, COME ON... ALL THESE SHOTS FOR A TWO-MONTH TRIP?
YEAH, BUT HOW MANY KIDS AT YOUR SCHOOL CAN SAY THEY'RE IMMUNE TO RIGELIAN FEVER?
OH, YOU'RE A BIG HELP.
HEY, BUT IT'S WORTH IT. WHO WANTS TO GO BLIND LIKE THOSE POOR SUCKERS ON RIGEL FIVE?
THOMPSON FAMILY-- VICTOR, REGINA AND CHARLES... UNDERHILL... TORY.

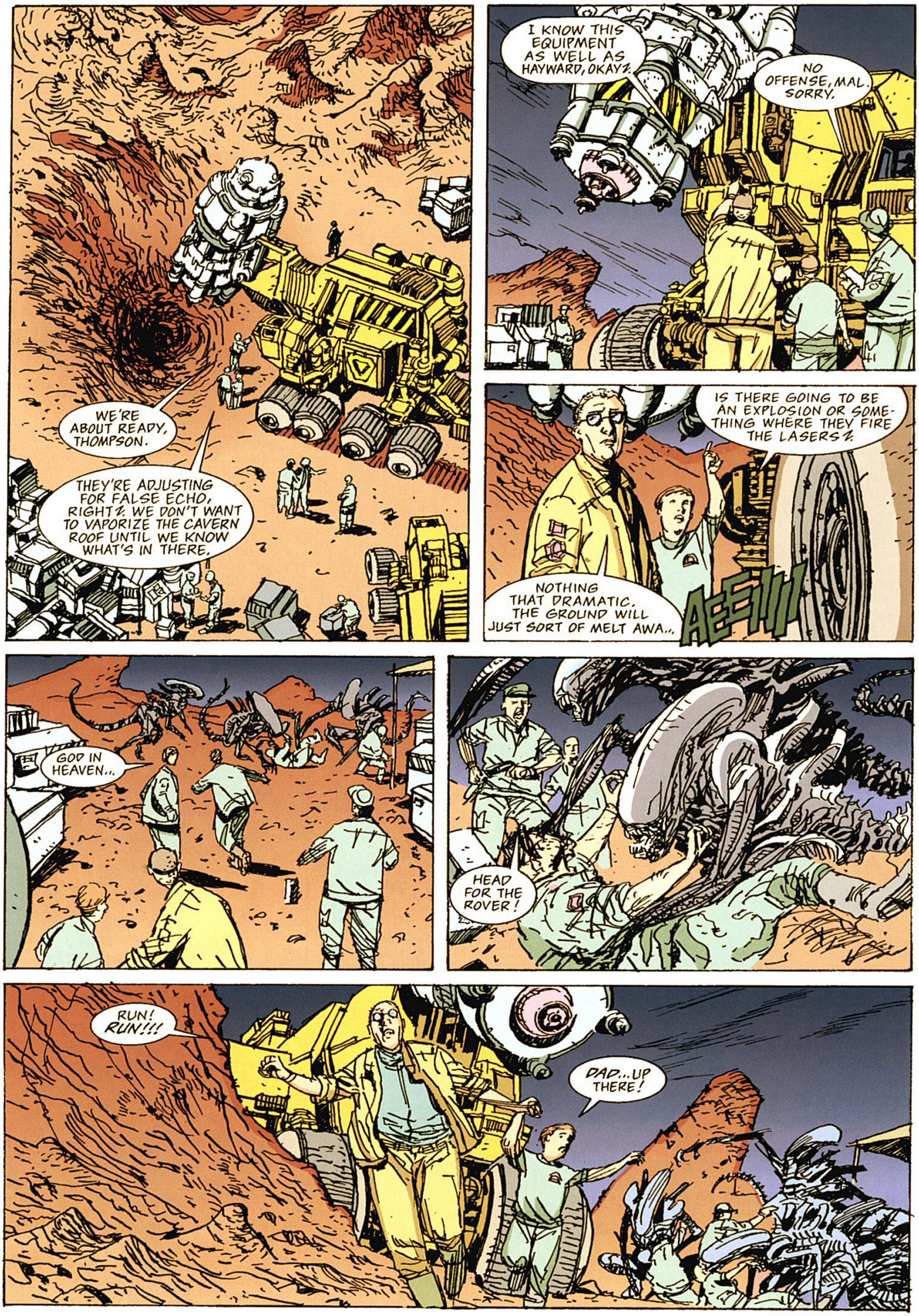

YOU'RE HANGING TOUGH, CHARLIE. THAT BATCH REALLY STUNG.
WASN'T SO BAD..
YOU KNOW, MOST NORMAL KIDS DON'T FIND XENO-ARCHAEOLOGY ALL THAT EXCITING. HE'S REALLY TRYING.
HOW ABOUT YOU, DOCTOR MAKALA? LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING OFF-PLANET?
NOT ESPECIALLY. GEO SURVEYS ARE PRETTY ROUTINE... AT LEAST, ONE HOPES SO.
EVEN WHEN THE MINERAL PROFILE LOOKS SO PROMISING?
WELL, THERE MIGHT BE SOME REAL DISCOVERIES-- THERE'S SOME SIGN OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS...
DISCOVERY ISN'T MY DEPARTMENT, MR. THOMPSON. FILE THESE CERTIFICATES WITH THE COMPANY REGISTRAR.
SOME BEDSIDE MANNER.. I HOPE I DON'T HAVE TO GO ON SICK CALL, THIS TRIP.
HE'S REGULAR SERVICE, GINA. IT'S ALL OLD HAT TO HIM, I GUESS.

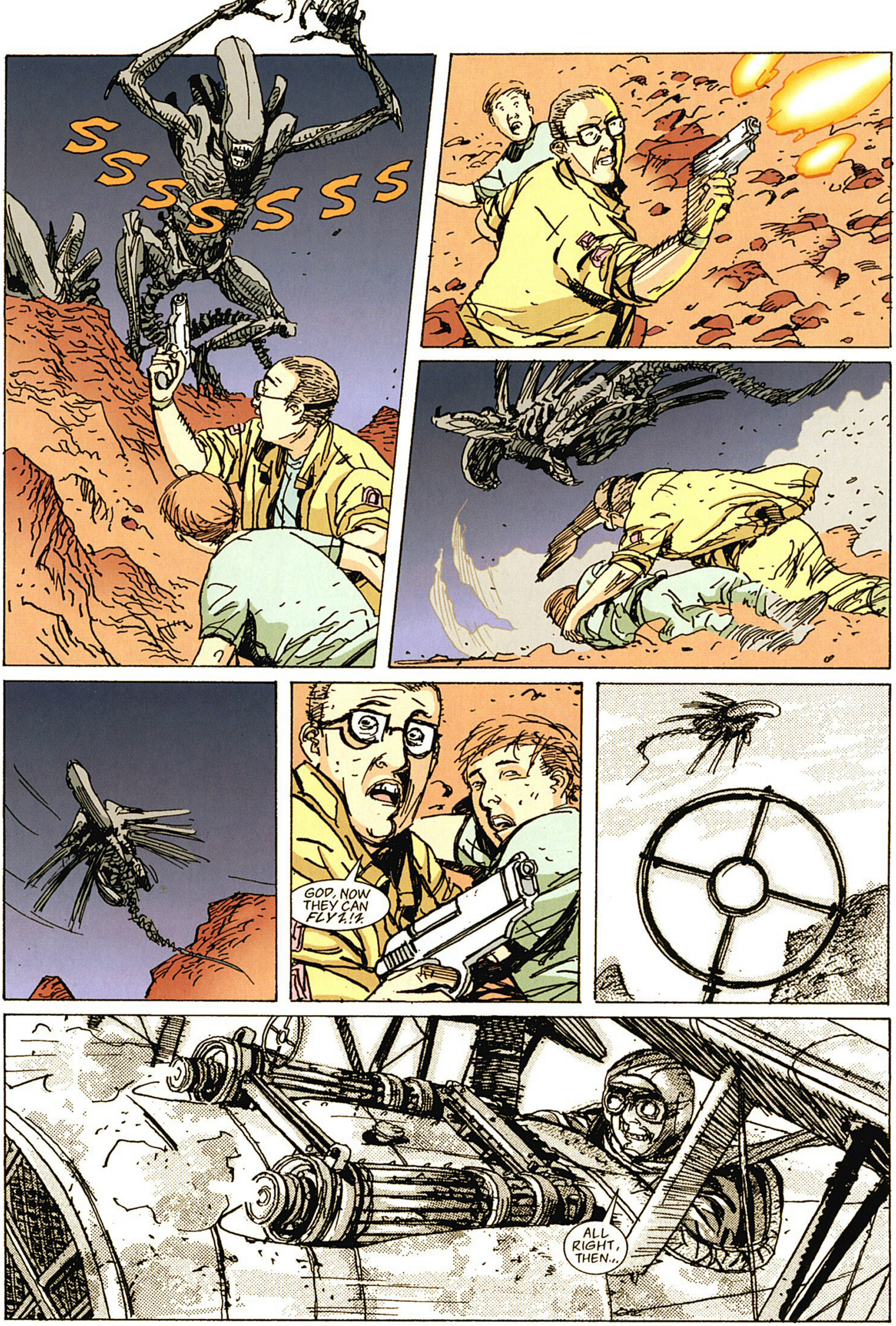

I STILL SAY MAKALA WAS JUST A SOUR OLD POOP, VIC.
BUT HE COULDN'T DAMPEN OUR ENTHUSIASM, COULD HE?
CERTAINLY NOT CHARLIE'S... DISCOVERY NOT BEING THE DOCTOR'S DEPARTMENT...
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SARGON IV UP TO NOW?
WELL...IT'S ALL JUST ROCKS, ISN'T IT?
EVERY PLANET IS, KIDDO. THAT'S WHY ROCKDOCS LIKE YOUR MOM ARE ALWAYS IN DEMAND.
BUT SERGEANT TORY SAYS I CAN GO OUT WITH HER TEAM WHEN THE SURVEY STARTS... IF IT'S OKAY...
THEN YOU'D BEST GET SOME SLEEP. THEY'LL BE LEAVING AT FIRST LIGHT.
YOU KNOW, I THINK HE'S REALLY EXCITED TO BE HERE.
AND HOW ABOUT YOU? NOT A BAD SECOND HONEYMOON...
I DON'T REMEMBER A FIRST ONE, PROFESSOR.

READY TO CORE AT SIXTY METERS?
WAIT A MINUTE, GENE. COME LOOK AT THE SONAR.
WHAT'S THAT BIG ROUNDISH THING?
A CAVERN, MOST LIKELY, POSSIBLY ARTIFICIAL. THIS IS THE KIND OF THING YOUR FATHER'S HERE FOR.
WE'D BETTER CALL IT QUITS, GENE-- WAIT UNTIL VICTOR GIVES US A GO-AHEAD.
JUST AS WELL. A COUPLE OF THE CREW SEEM A LITTLE UNDER THE WEATHER.
AND I'M NOT FEELING TOO GOOD MYSELF...
GENE... WE'VE GOTTA GET BACK TO BASE. I THINK I'M GONNA FAINT... BAUMAN'S PUKING HER GUTS UP...
CALL ALCORN-- HAVE HIM ALERT THE MEDICO.
DID IT. HE SAYS MAKALA'S GOT HIS HANDS FULL ALREADY.


HOW COULD SO MANY PEOPLE GET SICK AT THE SAME TIME?
PROB'LY FOOD POISONING.
MAYBE SOME LOCAL BACTERIA, WHO KNOWS?
ANYWAY, ALCORN CALLED A MEETING FOR AFTER SUPPER, TO GIVE US AN UPDATE. SO WASH UP, CHARLIE.
MAYBE WE SHOULD ASK HIM TO STAY ON BASE TOMORROW, RATHER THAN GO WITH THE TEAM...?
FIRST LET'S SEE IF ANYONE'S GOING OUT.
IF THEY ARE, I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO CHANGE. AFTER ALL, THE SICK WILL BE STAYING HERE, WON'T THEY?
PROBABLY BE SAFER GOING WITH US.


ALCORN--IS THE COMPANY THINKING OF CUTTING THE MISSION SHORT?
I'VE TALKED WITH SHAW AT HEADQUARTERS. THEY SEE NO NEED FOR THAT.
IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR PLANETFALL TO CAUSE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ILLNESS... LATENT INFECTIONS AND SO ON. WHICH WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THE VARYING SYMPTOMS.
OF COURSE, WE'VE HAD TO RESHUFFLE THE SCHEDULE, AND SOME CREW ASSIGNMENTS. CHECK WITH ME FOR DETAILS.
THE MAIN THING IS TO JUST STAY COOL AND GET OUR JOBS DONE, RIGHT?
WILL WE BE PROCEEDING WITH THE SITE EXCAVATION TOMORROW, GREG?
YES, WITH ONE CHANGE. LUMUMBA WILL BE LEADING THE GEO-CREW, NOT HAYWARD.
DAMN--HIM, TOO? SAME BUG AS THE OTHERS ON HIS TEAM?


WE'RE ABOUT READY, THOMPSON.
THEY'RE ADJUSTING FOR FALSE ECHO, RIGHT? WE DON'T WANT TO VAPORIZE THE CAVERN ROOF UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT'S IN THERE.
I KNOW THIS EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS HAYWARD, OKAY?
NO OFFENSE, MAL. SORRY.
IS THERE GOING TO BE AN EXPLOSION OR SOMETHING WHERE THEY FIRE THE LASERS?
NOTHING THAT DRAMATIC. THE GROUND WILL JUST SORT OF MELT AWA...
AEEIIII
GOD IN HEAVEN...
HEAD FOR THE ROVER!
RUN! RUN!!!
DAD...UP THERE!


SSSSSSSS
GOD, NOW THEY CAN FLY?!?!
ALL RIGHT, THEN...

1216
1216

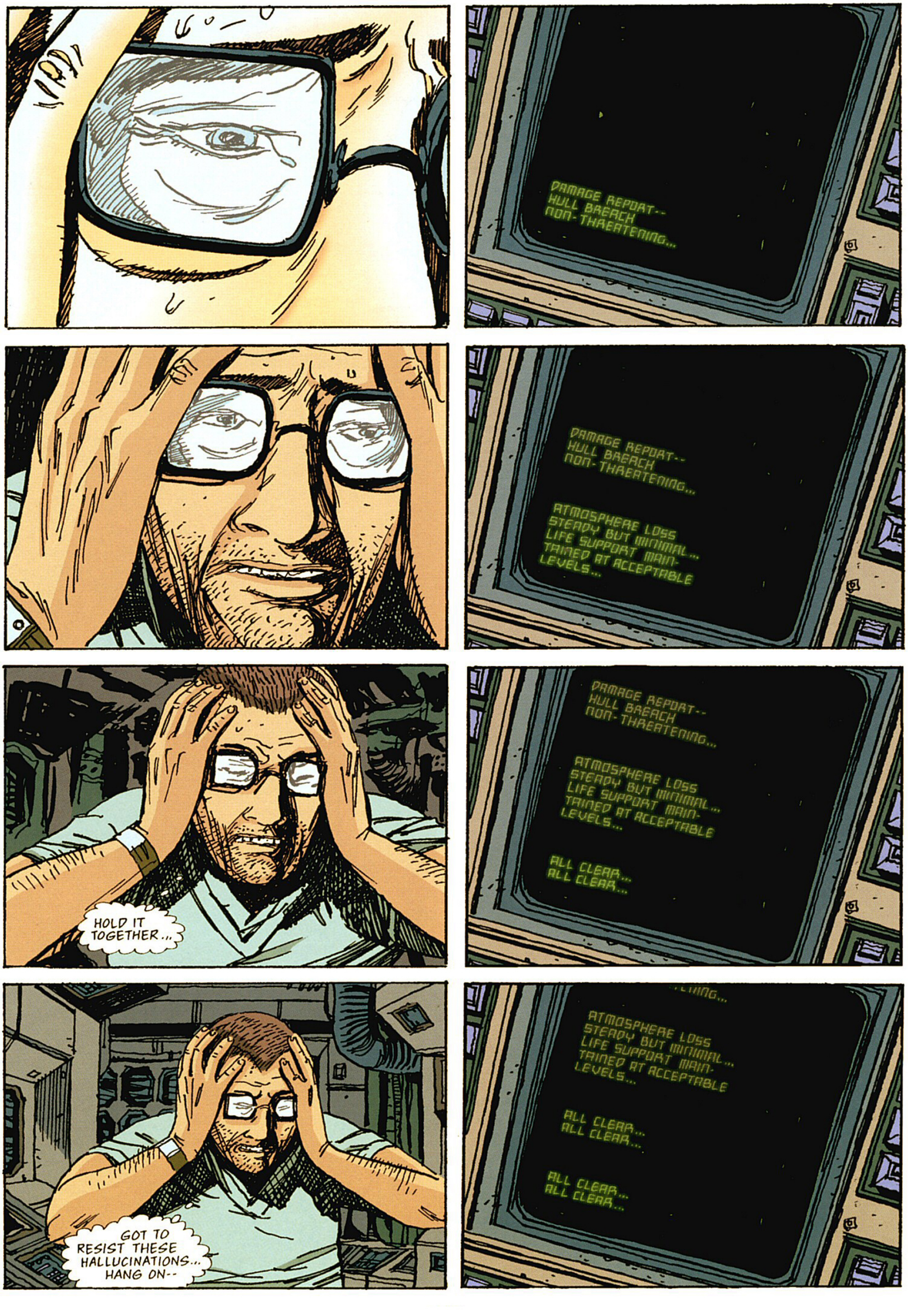
BAD DREAM, SWEETHEART?
ANOTHER HALLUCINATION... CRAZY... FEVER'S SCORCHING MY SYNAPSES.
YOU--YOU'RE ANOTHER ONE, AREN'T YOU? JUST A DREAM... YOU AND CHARLIE... YOU'RE BOTH DEAD.
JUST A CRAZY DREAM...
ONLY HALF RIGHT, VIC.
I'M SICK, MAYBE DYING... BUT YOU KNOW I'M NOT DEAD.
BUT CHARLIE...
OH, GOD... CHARLIE...
C'MON, VIC-- THE CHARLIE YOU'RE GRIEVING WAS NEVER REALLY ALIVE.
YOU HAD THIS FANTASY OF BEING THE PERFECT FATHER...
BUT FOR THAT, YOU WOULD HAVE NEEDED A PERFECT SON. AND CHARLIE WASN'T PERFECT. HE DIDN'T EVEN LIKE BASEBALL.
DAMN YOU! GOD DAMN YOU!

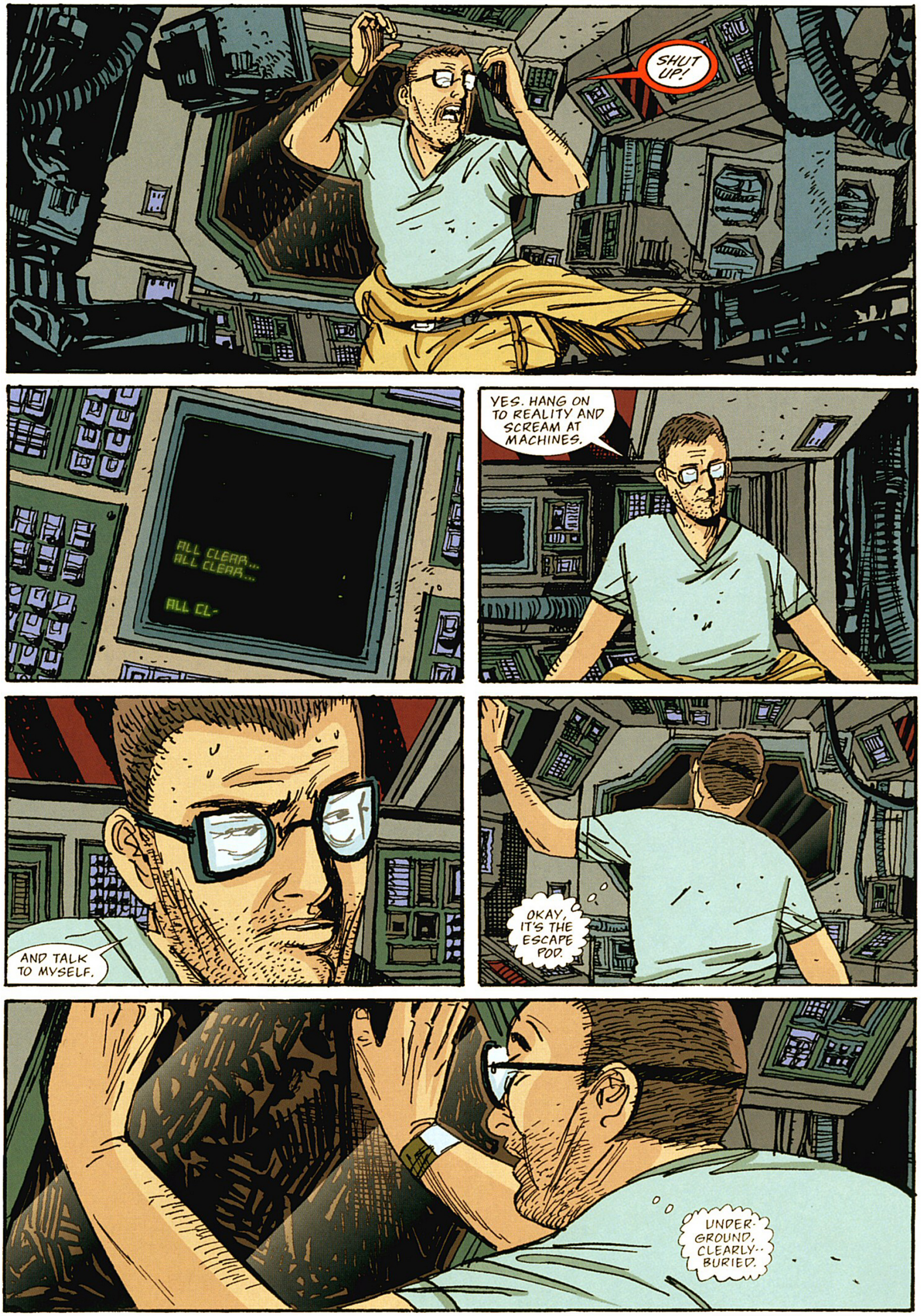
OH, IT'S ALL RIGHT, VICTOR-- WE STILL HAVE EACH OTHER.
JUST MY OWN ID MONSTERS TALKING, DON'T LISTEN, DON'T...
AND YOU'RE GOING TO GET ANOTHER CHANCE, ANOTHER CHANCE TO BE THAT PERFECT FATHER.
WHA...?
THIS TIME, I'M GIVING YOU THE PERFECT SON.
HSSSS SSSSS
AAAAIIIIII!!!

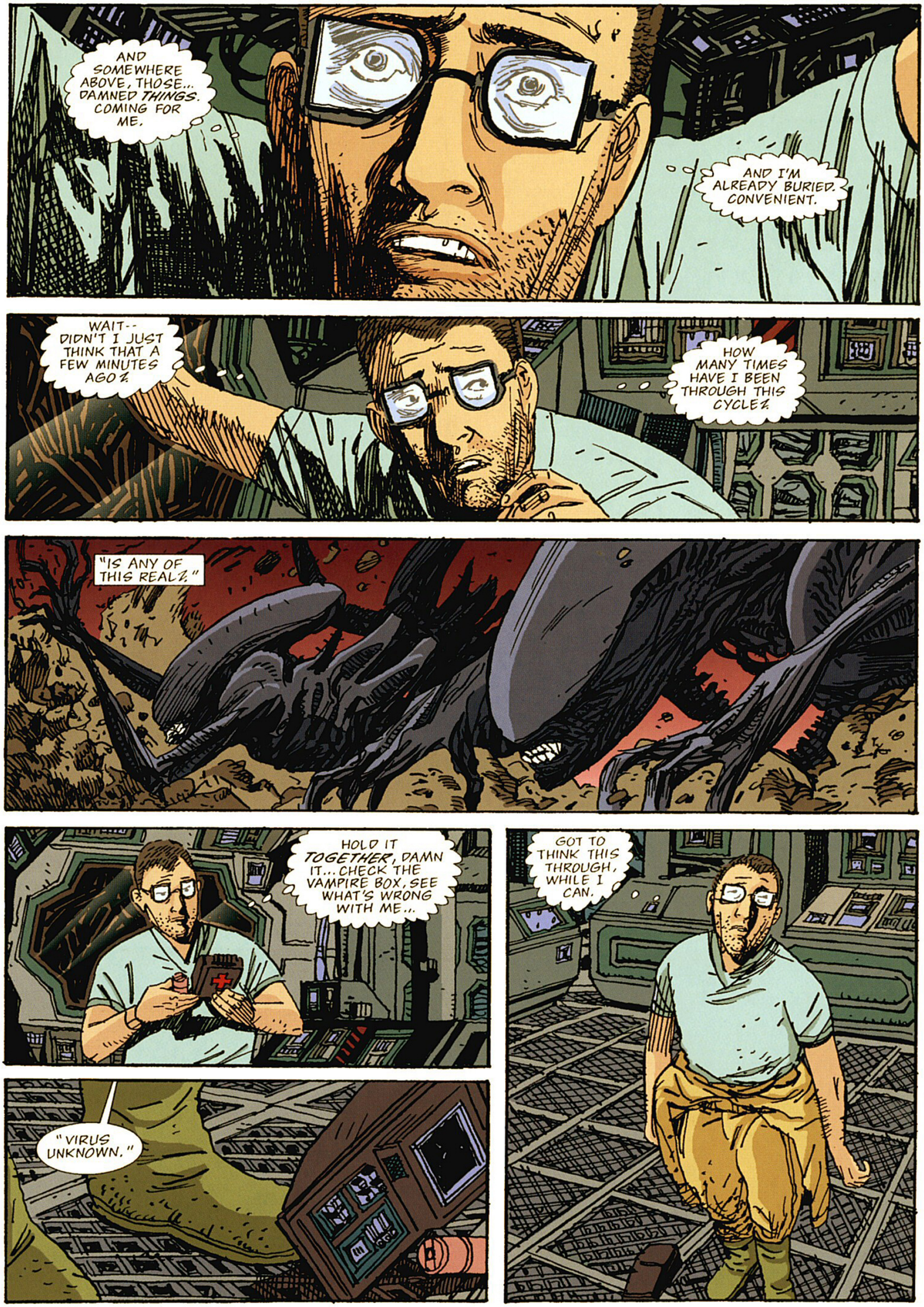
WARNING... WARNING... THE HULL HAS BEEN BREACHED... WARNING ... WARNING...
OH, GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE--GOT TO FIND A WAY TO PATCH IT BEFORE...
DIRT? DIRT...?!
ggggghhhh...
ENGAGE DISTRESS BEACON--GET HELP! GET THE MARINES!

"THAT'S IT! BLOW THE BASTARDS AWAY!"
KILL'EM! KILL'EM! KILL'EM!
NO! WE'VE GOTTA WIPE'EM OUT!
DON'T LEAVE ME...
DON'T LEAVE ME...
NOT DOWN HERE.

"NO BEACON CAN GET THROUGH ALL THIS ROCK. I'M ALONE.
"FACE IT... THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE ANY RESCUE.
"ALL I CAN DO... IS TRY TO SURVIVE..."


DAMAGE REPORT--
HULL BREACH
NON-THREATENING...
DAMAGE REPORT--
HULL BREACH
NON-THREATENING...
ATMOSPHERE LOSS
STEADY BUT MINIMAL...
LIFE SUPPORT MAIN-
TAINED AT ACCEPTABLE
LEVELS...
HOLD IT TOGETHER...
DAMAGE REPORT--
HULL BREACH
NON-THREATENING...
ATMOSPHERE LOSS
STEADY BUT MINIMAL...
LIFE SUPPORT MAIN-
TAINED AT ACCEPTABLE
LEVELS...
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CLEAR...
GOT TO RESIST THESE HALLUCINATIONS... HANG ON--
ATMOSPHERE LOSS
STEADY BUT MINIMAL...
LIFE SUPPORT MAIN-
TAINED AT ACCEPTABLE
LEVELS...
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CLEAR...


SHUT UP!
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CLEAR...
ALL CL-
YES. HANG ON TO REALITY AND SCREAM AT MACHINES.
AND TALK TO MYSELF.
OKAY, IT'S THE ESCAPE POD.
UNDER-GROUND, CLEARLY.. BURIED.


AND SOMEWHERE ABOVE, THOSE... DAMNED *THINGS*. COMING FOR ME.
AND I'M ALREADY BURIED. CONVENIENT.
WAIT-- DIDN'T I JUST THINK THAT A FEW MINUTES AGO?
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I BEEN THROUGH THIS CYCLE?
"IS ANY OF THIS REAL?"
HOLD IT *TOGETHER*, DAMN IT... CHECK THE VAMPIRE BOX, SEE WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME...
"VIRUS UNKNOWN."
GOT TO THINK THIS THROUGH, WHILE I CAN.

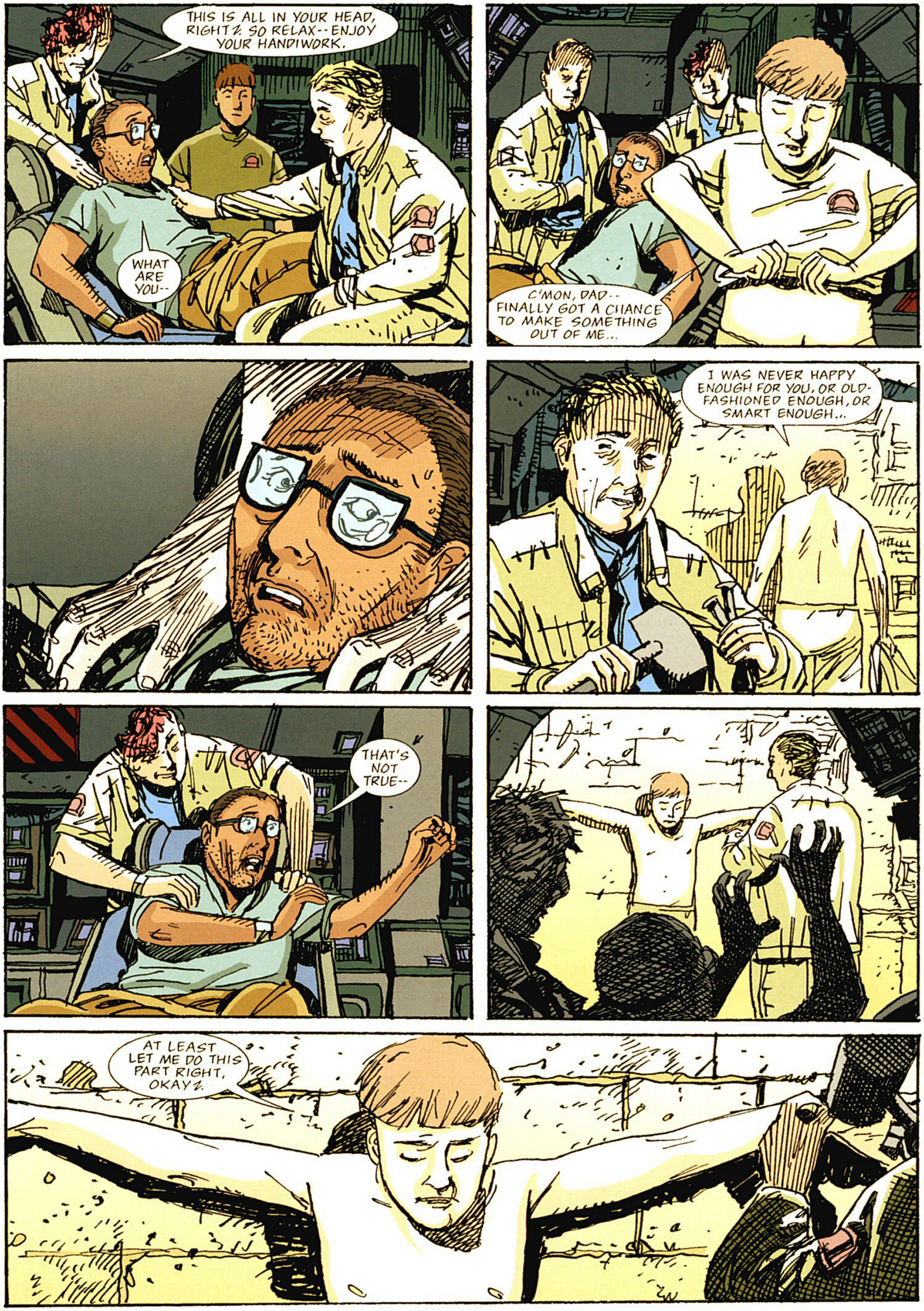
"WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...?"
GOD IN HEAVEN...
IT'S GOT CARVER!
THE HELL IT HAS...
HOLD STILL, BABY--
BOOM
MAKE FOR THE ROVER!
DAMMIT!

VIC, CHARLIE... LOOK OUT!
GET IN, DAMMIT!
THE HELL--?
PANT PANT IT WAS THEM, WASN'T IT? THOSE BUG THINGS YOU HEAR THE STORIES ABOUT...
...BUT I NEVER HEARD THEY TOOK PRISONERS.
I WANT TO KNOW WHY THEY RAN AWAY. THEY HAD US, ALL OF US.
NOT JUST BURKE--THEY GOT OTHERS, I SAW... ALISON, CARVER...

NO. I GOT CARVER.
ALL GOOD PEOPLE... WHAT A DAMNED WASTE.
YOU DID YOUR BEST OUT THERE, MAL...
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT, THOMPSON?
DRIVE THIS THING.
OH, GOD... CARVER, BURKE, ALISON...
SHUT UP, FRANK.

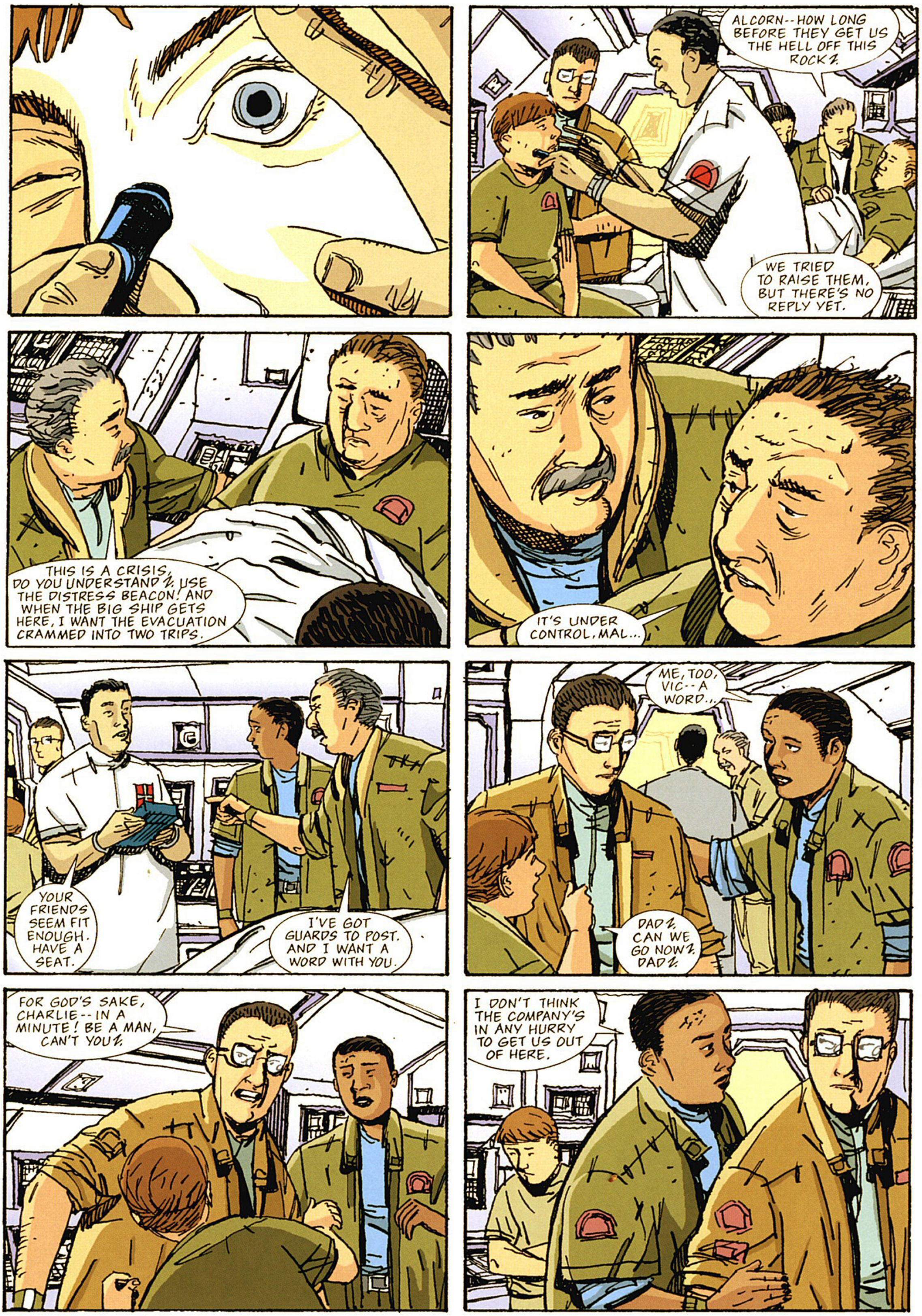
BRACE UP, FORREST. YOU'LL BE OKAY.
THEY'LL BE BACK.. THEY'LL WANT US ALL..
HE'S IN SHOCK, CHARLIE. DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION.
NO, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE..
LET ME FEEL YOUR FOREHEAD, FRA--
KEEP AWAY! KEEP YOUR FILTHY CLAWS AWAY!
HE'S HOT AS HELL. HE'S SICK..
ALL OF US! THEY WANT ALL OF US!
CAN'T THIS THING GO ANY FASTER?

FASTER...?
HEY, THIS DID TURN OUT TO BE AN EDUCATIONAL TRIP, HUH?
CHARLIE... I'M SO SORRY...
AW, YOU WORRY TOO MUCH, DAD. C'MON OUT AND HIT ME SOME HIGH ONES!
WISH I COULD, SON.
BUT I CAN'T GIVE IN TO THIS FEVER, NOT EVEN FOR A LOVELY DREAM.
IT SEEMS DISRESPECTFUL, SOMEHOW, TO ALL THOSE DEAD PEOPLE UP THERE.
DEAD'S EASY, THOMPSON. YOU'RE THE ONE WITH PROBLEMS.
YEAH, LIGHTEN UP A LITTLE...



THIS IS ALL IN YOUR HEAD, RIGHT? SO RELAX--ENJOY YOUR HANDIWORK.
WHAT ARE YOU--
C'MON, DAD-- FINALLY GOT A CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF ME...
I WAS NEVER HAPPY ENOUGH FOR YOU, OR OLD-FASHIONED ENOUGH, OR SMART ENOUGH...
THAT'S NOT TRUE--
AT LEAST LET ME DO THIS PART RIGHT, OKAY?

COME ON, VIC-- EVERYBODY OUT.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
DR. MAKALA'S CONVERTED THE SHUTTLE INTO A HOSPITAL. THE INFIRMARY COULDN'T HOLD SO MANY SICK, ALL AT ONCE.
OE3L
HEARD ABOUT YOUR INCIDENT, LUMUMBA. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT YOUR PARTY.
AS YOU SEE, THE ORBIT COUCHES MAKE FAIR RESTRAINT BEDS. I JUST HOPE WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO GO AROUND.

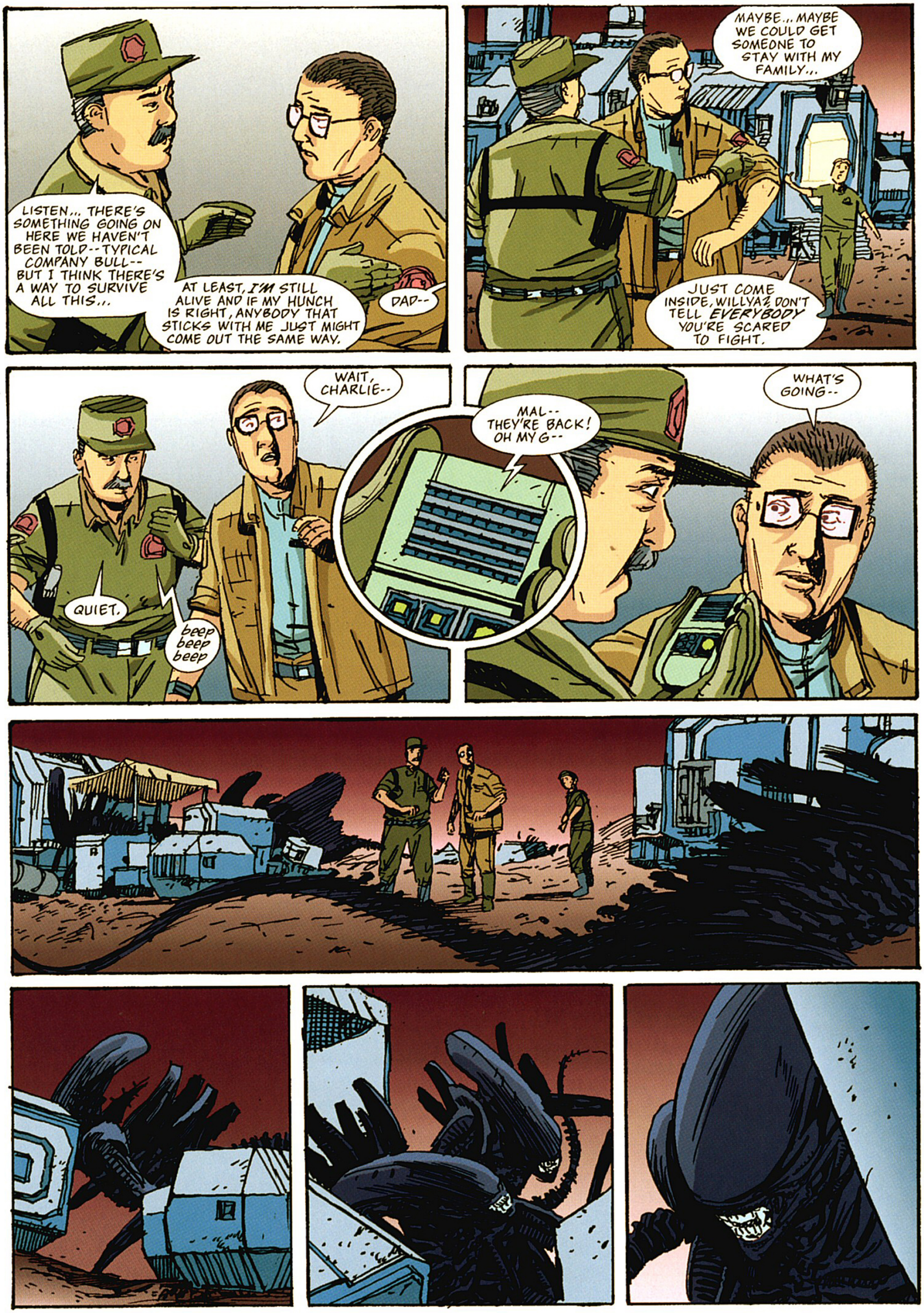

ALCORN--HOW LONG BEFORE THEY GET US THE HELL OFF THIS ROCK?
WE TRIED TO RAISE THEM, BUT THERE'S NO REPLY YET.
THIS IS A CRISIS, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? USE THE DISTRESS BEACON! AND WHEN THE BIG SHIP GETS HERE, I WANT THE EVACUATION CRAMMED INTO TWO TRIPS.
IT'S UNDER CONTROL, MAL...
YOUR FRIENDS SEEM FIT ENOUGH. HAVE A SEAT.
I'VE GOT GUARDS TO POST. AND I WANT A WORD WITH YOU.
ME, TOO, VIC--A WORD...
DAD? CAN WE GO NOW? DAD?
FOR GOD'S SAKE, CHARLIE--IN A MINUTE! BE A MAN, CAN'T YOU?
I DON'T THINK THE COMPANY'S IN ANY HURRY TO GET US OUT OF HERE.

C'MON, TORY-- WITH THOSE CREATURES RUNNING AROUND...
MAYBE *BECAUSE* OF THE CREATURES, VIC. MAYBE THEY'RE WORTH MORE TO THE COMPANY THAN ALL OF US PUT TOGETHER. MAYBE THIS WHOLE EXPEDITION WAS JUST A BLIND--
THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, TORY. AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
WHAT'S *REALLY* GOING ON HERE, YOU BASTARD?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
TELL YOUR MOM I'LL BE IN SOON, CHARLIE. I NEED A FEW MINUTES TO THINK...

3LK
VIC...
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE? CHARLIE HAS A FEVER--
--BUT I'VE GOT TO LIE BACK DOWN.
GINA...?
STOMACH CRAMPS... JUST HIT...
OH, GOD, VIC... WHAT'S WRONG WITH US ALL?
WHEN'S THE COMPANY GETTING US OUT OF HERE?
WHEN HELL FREEZES OVER, I'D SAY--
WE ACTIVATED THE EMERGENCY BEACON, AND THERE'S STILL NO ANSWER.
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE STUCK HERE FOR A WHILE.

SORRY TO BARGE IN, BUT MANNERS ARE DOWN THE CHUTE RIGHT NOW. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO RESCUE THOSE CAPTIVES.
BETWEEN THE SICK AND THE SCARED, WE'RE NOT GETTING MANY TAKERS. I THOUGHT SOMEBODY LIKE YOU COULD SET AN EXAMPLE.
I'M NO SOLDIER, MAL...
LOOK, NOBODY WANTS TO FACE THOSE THINGS AGAIN, BUT THEY'VE GOT OUR PEOPLE. AND THEY'LL BE BACK FOR MORE.
SO I'M ASKING FOR YOUR HELP.
I CAN'T-- I MEAN, SOMEONE HAS TO LOOK AFTER MY FAMILY...
SURE. ANYBODY CAN SEE HOW MUCH PROTECTION YOU'D BE.
LUMUMBA--

YOU DON'T TALK LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF A MAN'S SON!
YOU DON'T TALK LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF A MAN'S SON--
WE'VE GOT A CRISIS HERE, THOMPSON. I DON'T MUCH CARE WHAT YOUR SON LEARNS ABOUT YOU.
MY WIFE IS SICK! AND MY BOY...
AND FORREST JUST DIED, AND I'M PISSING BLOOD. SO TAKE A NUMBER.
BUT MY MONEY'S ON THOSE UGLY BASTARDS WIPING US OUT LONG BEFORE THIS EPIDEMIC DOES THE JOB.

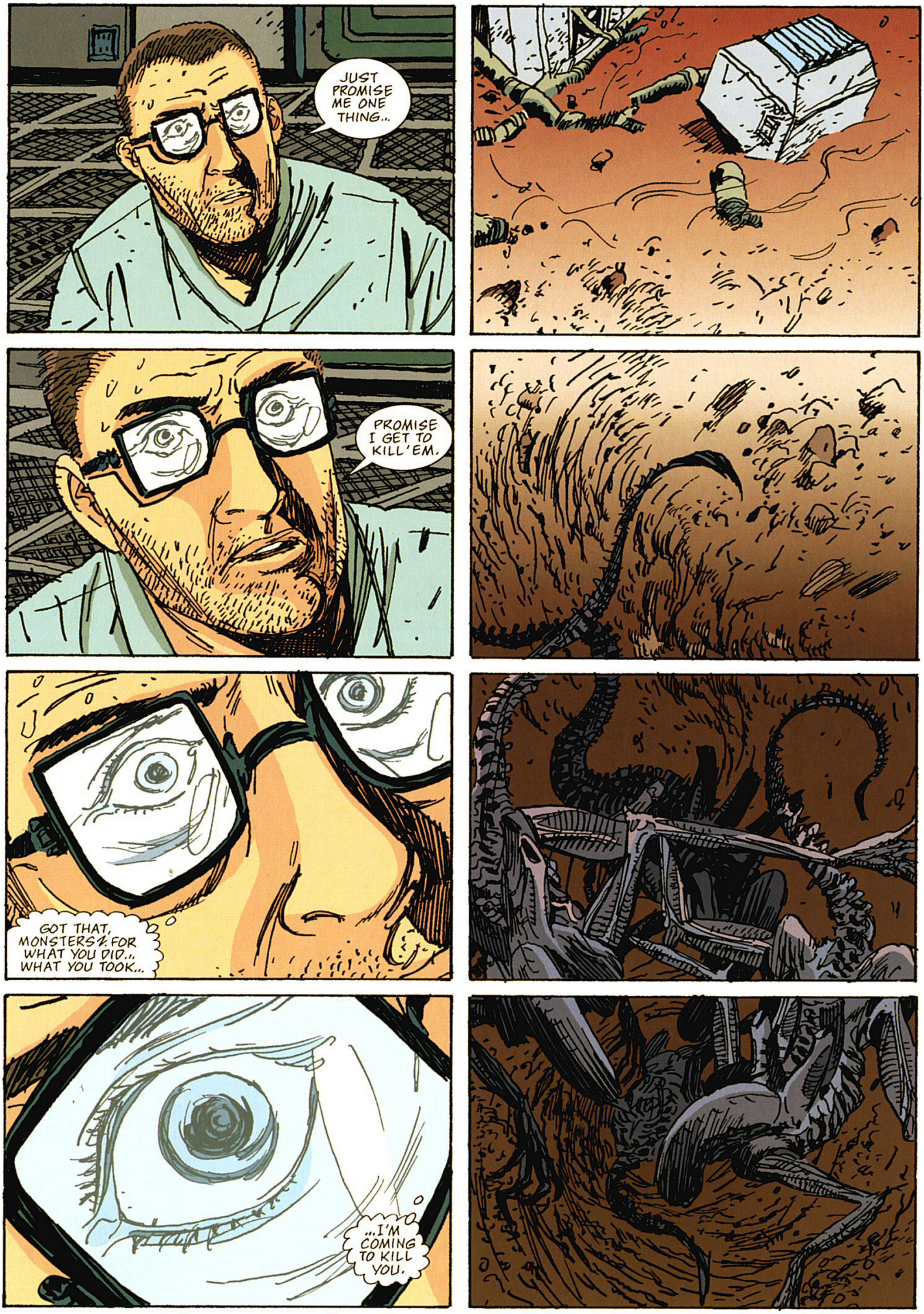

LISTEN... THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON HERE WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD--TYPICAL COMPANY BULL-- BUT I THINK THERE'S A WAY TO SURVIVE ALL THIS...
AT LEAST, I'M STILL ALIVE AND IF MY HUNCH IS RIGHT, ANYBODY THAT STICKS WITH ME JUST MIGHT COME OUT THE SAME WAY.
DAD--
MAYBE... MAYBE WE COULD GET SOMEONE TO STAY WITH MY FAMILY...
JUST COME INSIDE, WILLYA? DON'T TELL EVERYBODY YOU'RE SCARED TO FIGHT.
WAIT, CHARLIE--
QUIET.
beep beep beep
MAL-- THEY'RE BACK! OH MY G--
WHAT'S GOING--

DAD..?
DAD--!
HSSSSS

NO!
GINA--!

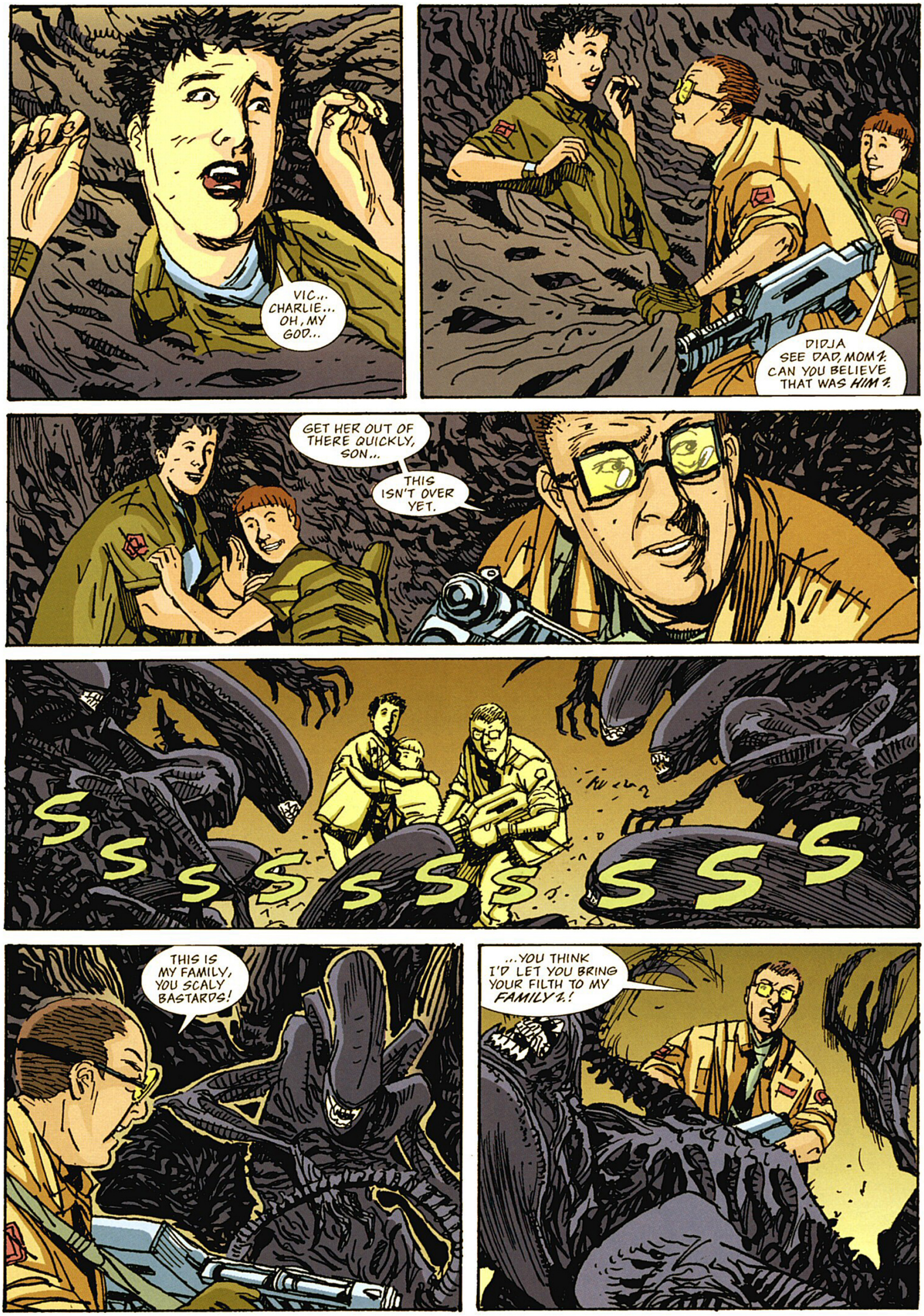
DON'T SHOOT--
MOM!

BETTER GATHER UP WHAT WE CAN. WE'RE MOVING INTO THE SHUTTLE.
CAN WE... CAN WE GET EVERYONE IN ?
WE CAN NOW.
I KNOW YOU WERE SCARED I'D HIT YOUR WIFE--
BUT SHE MIGHT BE BETTER OFF IF YOU HAD.
SO I GUESS YOU'VE GOT YOUR VOLUNTEER.

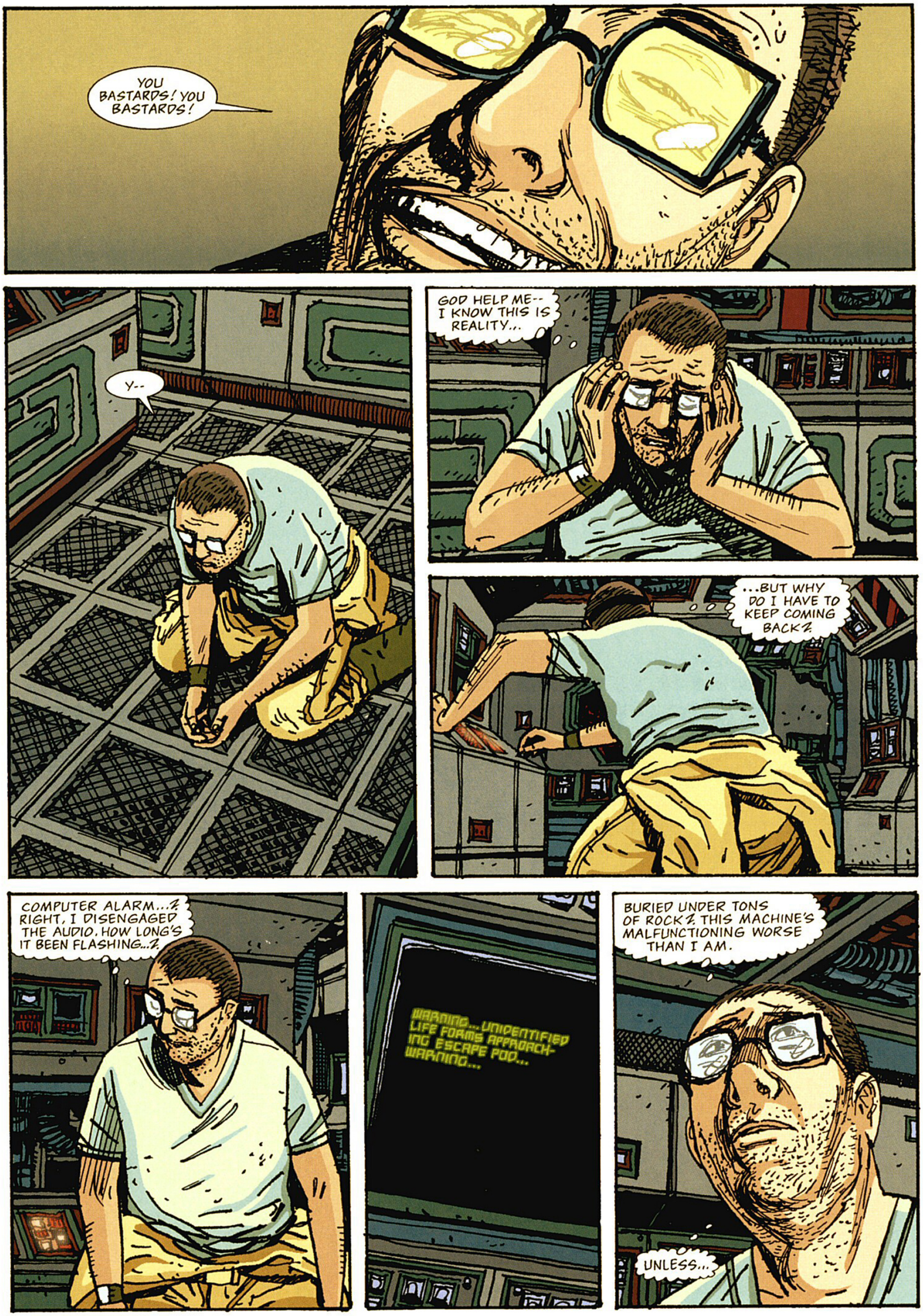

JUST PROMISE ME ONE THING..
PROMISE I GET TO KILL'EM.
GOT THAT, MONSTERS? FOR WHAT YOU DID.. WHAT YOU TOOK..
...I'M COMING TO KILL YOU.

LET'S GO.
MOVE IN FAST, GET TO THE PRISONERS. REMEMBER, THIS IS A RESCUE MISSION.
BUT WE KILL AS MANY OF THOSE THINGS AS WE CAN ON THE WAY.
IF WE PLAN ON GETTING HOME, WE'D BETTER KILL 'EM ALL...
SENTRY, READY...

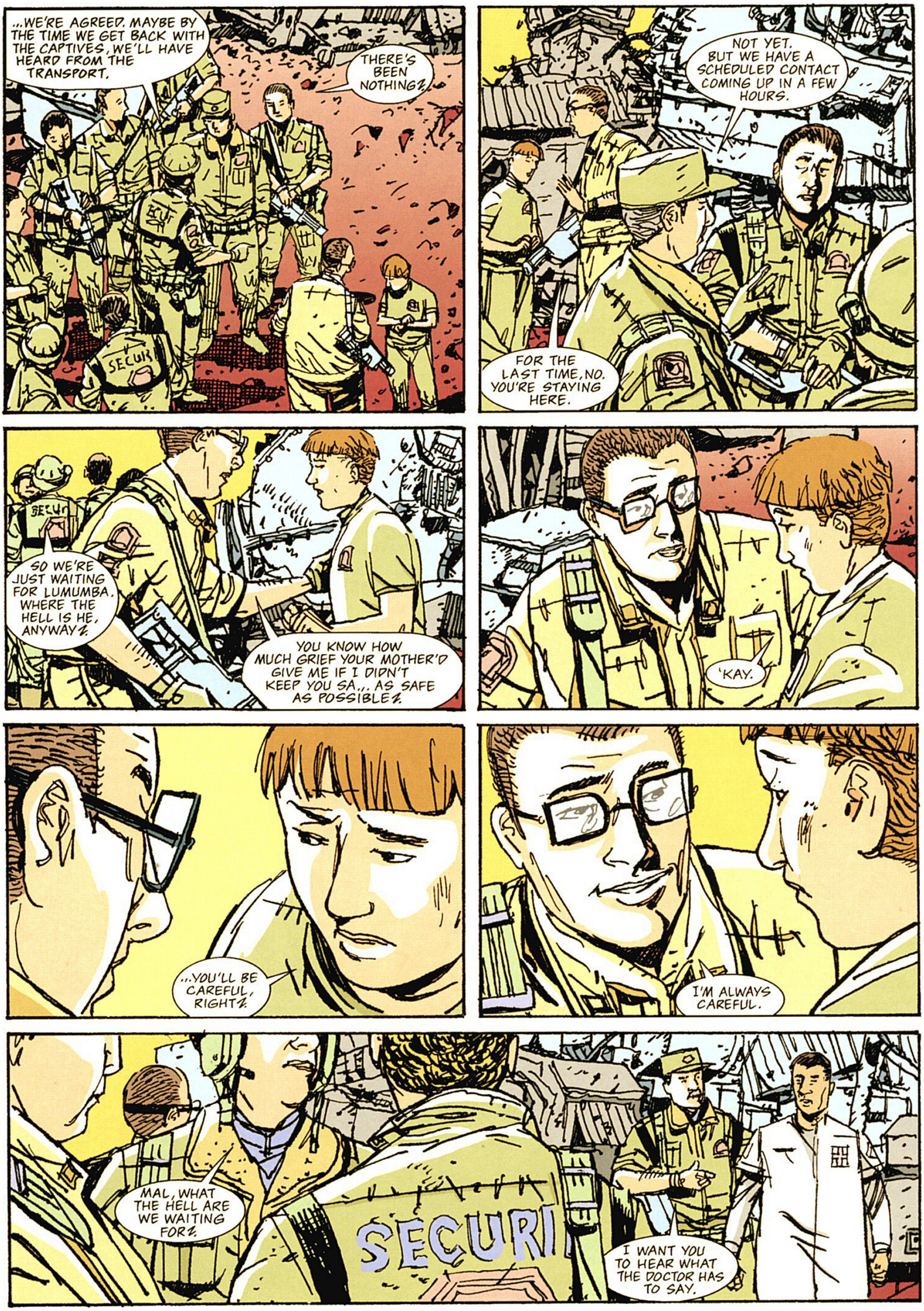
SSSS
SSS
GO!
KEEP BEHIND ME, CHARLIE--
GET 'EM, DAD! KILL 'EM!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM


VIC.. CHARLIE... OH, MY GOD...
DIDJA SEE DAD, MOM?! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT WAS *HIM*?!
GET HER OUT OF THERE QUICKLY, SON...
THIS ISN'T OVER YET.
SSSSSSSSSSS
THIS IS MY FAMILY, YOU SCALY BASTARDS!
...YOU THINK I'D LET YOU BRING YOUR FILTH TO MY *FAMILY*?!

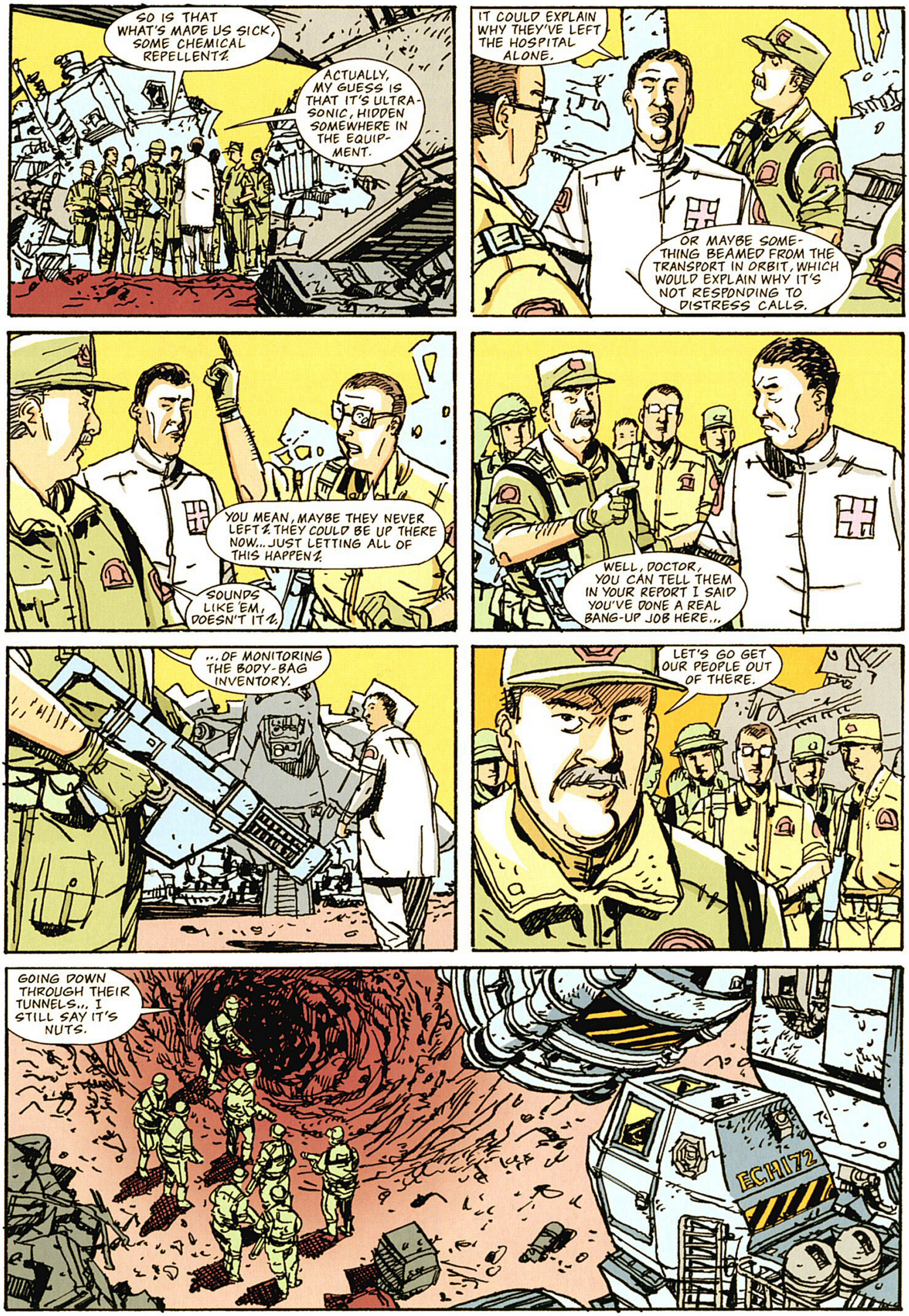
LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT!
AHH
RKSSS
RRRNN
SKRISS
RRNN!
AHH
AHH
RKSKS


YOU BASTARDS! YOU BASTARDS!
Y--
GOD HELP ME-- I KNOW THIS IS REALITY...
...BUT WHY DO I HAVE TO KEEP COMING BACK?
COMPUTER ALARM...? RIGHT, I DISENGAGED THE AUDIO. HOW LONG'S IT BEEN FLASHING...?
WARNING... UNIDENTIFIED LIFE FORMS APPROACH- ING ESCAPE POD... WARNING...
BURIED UNDER TONS OF ROCK? THIS MACHINE'S MALFUNCTIONING WORSE THAN I AM.
UNLESS...

THEY CAN BURROW, CAN'T THEY? THEIR NEST WAS IN A CAVERN...
THEN LET 'EM COME.
THIS VIRUS... THESE HALLUCINATIONS... THERE'S NOTHING BUT HORROR INSIDE ME.
THEY'RE WELCOME TO IT.
AFTER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED UP THERE, THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO SURVIVE.


...WE'RE AGREED. MAYBE BY THE TIME WE GET BACK WITH THE CAPTIVES, WE'LL HAVE HEARD FROM THE TRANSPORT.
THERE'S BEEN NOTHING?
NOT YET. BUT WE HAVE A SCHEDULED CONTACT COMING UP IN A FEW HOURS.
FOR THE LAST TIME, NO. YOU'RE STAYING HERE.
SO WE'RE JUST WAITING FOR LUMUMBA. WHERE THE HELL IS HE, ANYWAY?
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH GRIEF YOUR MOTHER'D GIVE ME IF I DIDN'T KEEP YOU SA... AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE?
'KAY.
...YOU'LL BE CAREFUL, RIGHT?
I'M ALWAYS CAREFUL.
MAL, WHAT THE HELL ARE WE WAITING FOR?
I WANT YOU TO HEAR WHAT THE DOCTOR HAS TO SAY.

I REALLY DON'T SEE THE POINT...
THE POINT IS, I'LL SHOOT YOU ON THE SPOT IF YOU DON'T START TALKING.
ALL RIGHT. NOT THAT I KNOW MUCH MORE THAN YOU...
THIS PLANET-- IT WASN'T JUST A RANDOM CHOICE, WAS IT?
NO. THE COMPANY KNEW THERE WAS A HIVE.
THE PERFECT PLACE TO GET A WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE KILLED.
NO, THE PERFECT PLACE TO RUN... A TEST.
TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM GETTING KILLED, WHILE STILL GETTING THE MATERIAL.
SO THEY'RE TESTING SOME KIND OF WAY TO KEEP THE ALIENS AWAY, WHILE THEY SCOOP THE HIVES.
WORKING GREAT, ISN'T IT?
LOOK, MY ONLY JOB IS TO MONITOR CONDITIONS, SEE TO THIS EXPEDITION'S HEALTH...


SO IS THAT WHAT'S MADE US SICK, SOME CHEMICAL REPELLENT?
ACTUALLY, MY GUESS IS THAT IT'S ULTRA-SONIC, HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE EQUIP-MENT.
IT COULD EXPLAIN WHY THEY'VE LEFT THE HOSPITAL ALONE.
OR MAYBE SOME-THING BEAMED FROM THE TRANSPORT IN ORBIT, WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN WHY IT'S NOT RESPONDING TO DISTRESS CALLS.
YOU MEAN, MAYBE THEY NEVER LEFT? THEY COULD BE UP THERE NOW... JUST LETTING ALL OF THIS HAPPEN?
SOUNDS LIKE 'EM, DOESN'T IT?
WELL, DOCTOR, YOU CAN TELL THEM IN YOUR REPORT I SAID YOU'VE DONE A REAL BANG-UP JOB HERE...
...OF MONITORING THE BODY-BAG INVENTORY.
LET'S GO GET OUR PEOPLE OUT OF THERE.
GOING DOWN THROUGH THEIR TUNNELS... I STILL SAY IT'S NUTS.
ECH172

WE'RE NOT TAKING THEM ALL THE WAY, CARLTON. WE'LL CUT IN FROM THE TEST SHAFT.
BESIDES, THEY'LL NEVER LOOK FOR US TO COME AFTER THEM, WILL THEY?
WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL LOOK FOR? JUST STAY COOL... AND QUIET.
KEEP UP THAT SQUAWK, YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING YOU'LL LIKE A LOT LESS.
THIS WAY. WAIT ON MY SIGNAL WHEN WE REACH THE END.
OHGODOHGOD...

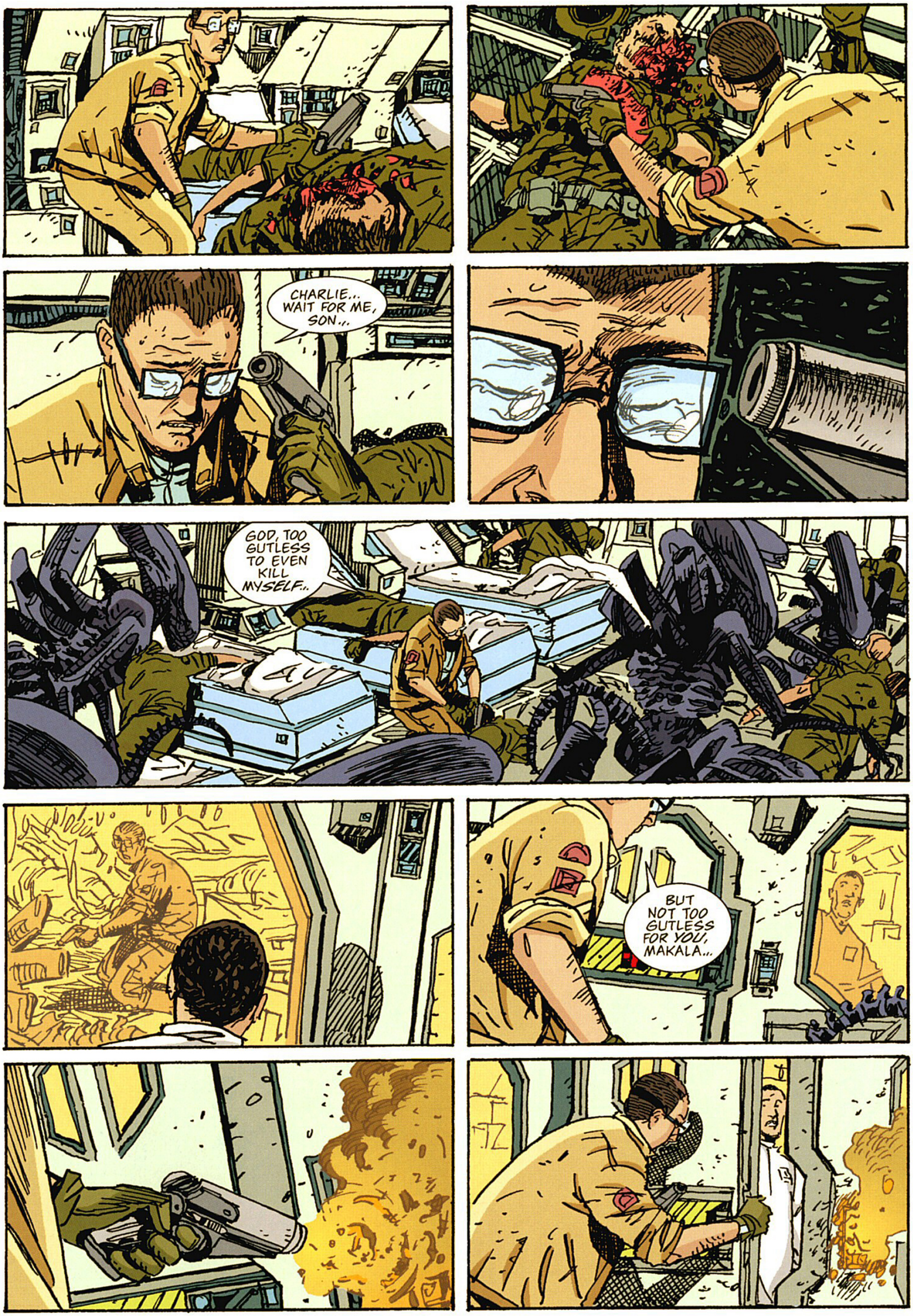
THERE! THERE THEY ARE!
WAIT, DAMMIT! WAI...
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW POW POW
GOD, NO...
SECURIT
POW
NOOOOO
NOOO
POW
POW
POW
THOMPSON, LOOK OUT!

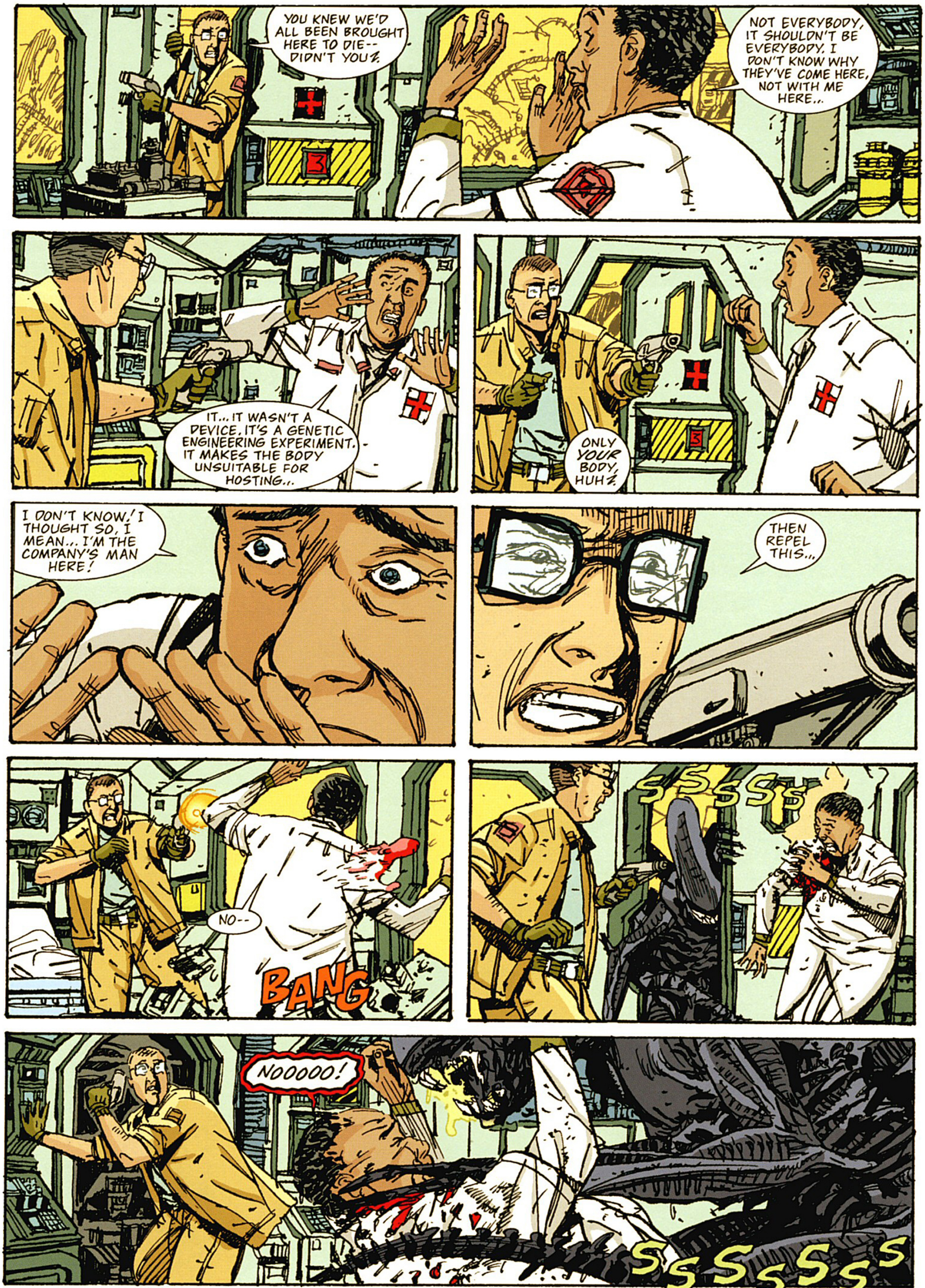
AAAAAHHHH!
uh... unh...
HEL...PPP
GINA... GINA...
VIC...?
GINA!
I'M HERE, HONEY. OH, GOD...
NO... VIC... NO...
JUST HANG ON, BABY.

VIC, YOU DON'T KNOW-- I DON'T WANT TO DIE, NOT THAT WAY--
YOU'RE SAFE, BABY! ALMOST THERE...
NO!
KILL ME... KILL ME... NOW!
LOOK, JUST TAKE IT EA...
OH, GOD... uhhhhggg GODDAMMIT, VIC--

SSSS
NO.
NONONONONO
NOOOOOO!!!

AAAAAAHHH!
VIC! COME ON!
AAAAAAHHH!
DAD!
RUN, DAD, RUN!
SSSSSSS
DAAAAAAAD...
OH, GOD, CHARLIE...
SSSSSS
CHARLIE...


CHARLIE... WAIT FOR ME, SON...
GOD, TOO GUTLESS TO EVEN KILL MYSELF...
BUT NOT TOO GUTLESS FOR YOU, MAKALA...



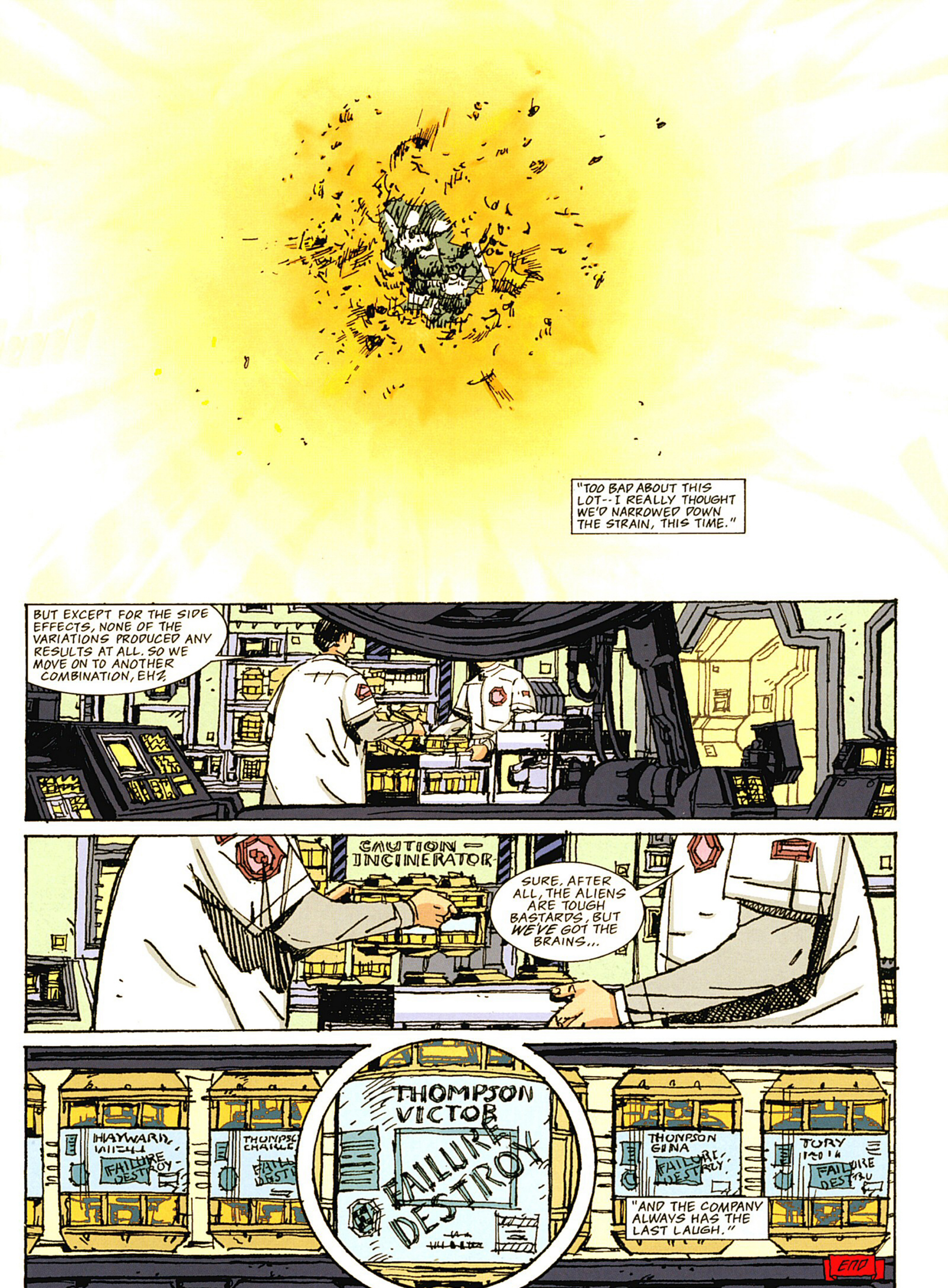
YOU KNEW WE'D ALL BEEN BROUGHT HERE TO DIE-- DIDN'T YOU?!
NOT EVERYBODY, IT SHOULDN'T BE EVERYBODY. I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY'VE COME HERE, NOT WITH ME HERE..
IT... IT WASN'T A DEVICE. IT'S A GENETIC ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT. IT MAKES THE BODY UNSUITABLE FOR HOSTING..
ONLY YOUR BODY, HUH?!
I DON'T KNOW! I THOUGHT SO. I MEAN.. I'M THE COMPANY'S MAN HERE!
THEN REPEL THIS...
NO--
BANG
SSSSSS
NOOOOO!
SSSSSSSS

aaaaaiiiieeee
GET AWAY--GET AWAY...
ESU
ESCAPE SURVIVAL UNIT 3
RRROOOAAARRR

I'M SORRY...
FOR WHAT, THOMPSON--NOT BEING DEAD, TOO? YOU AREN'T MISSING A THING.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, DAD? DON'T LIKE BEING A DISAPPOINTMENT?
SO YOU COULDN'T SAVE US, VIC--SO WHAT? AFTER ALL...
...NONE OF US EVER THOUGHT YOU COULD.

YES... HERE I AM.
SSS SS SSS
IT WAS THE INOCULATIONS, WASN'T IT? THEY MADE US SICK-- BUT ONE OF US WON THE LOTTERY, TOO... AND I'M THE LUCKY LAB RAT...
IT'S *ME*... THE REPELLENT'S IN ME.

AND... INSTEAD OF PLAYING HERO, I COULD'VE PROTECTED YOU ALL... JUST BY STAYING NEAR YOU.
SO ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SIT HERE UNTIL THE COMPANY SHIP COMES BACK...
...BACK TO PICK UP THE SOLE SURVIVOR THEY'D ALWAYS PLANNED ON.
LET 'EM COME.
WARNING...THRUSTER RESISTANCE...PROPULSION UNIT NEARING MELTDOWN... WARN--



"TOO BAD ABOUT THIS LOT--I REALLY THOUGHT WE'D NARROWED DOWN THE STRAIN, THIS TIME."
BUT EXCEPT FOR THE SIDE EFFECTS, NONE OF THE VARIATIONS PRODUCED ANY RESULTS AT ALL. SO WE MOVE ON TO ANOTHER COMBINATION, EH?
CAUTION — INCINERATOR
SURE. AFTER ALL, THE ALIENS ARE TOUGH BASTARDS, BUT WE'VE GOT THE BRAINS...
THOMPSON VICTOR
FAILURE DESTROY
THOMPSON GINA
"AND THE COMPANY ALWAYS HAS THE LAST LAUGH."
END

SURVIVAL

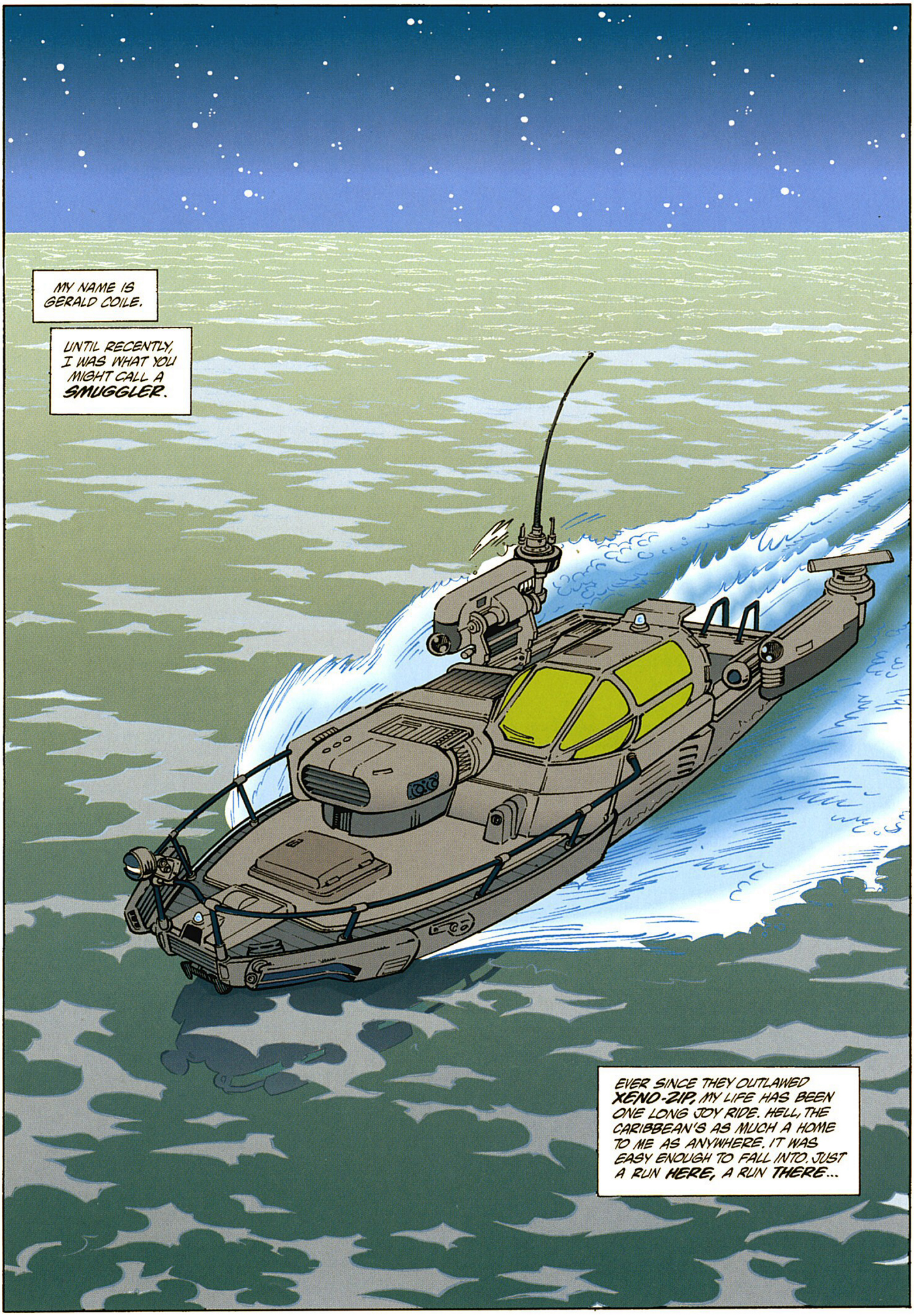
script
JAMES VANCE

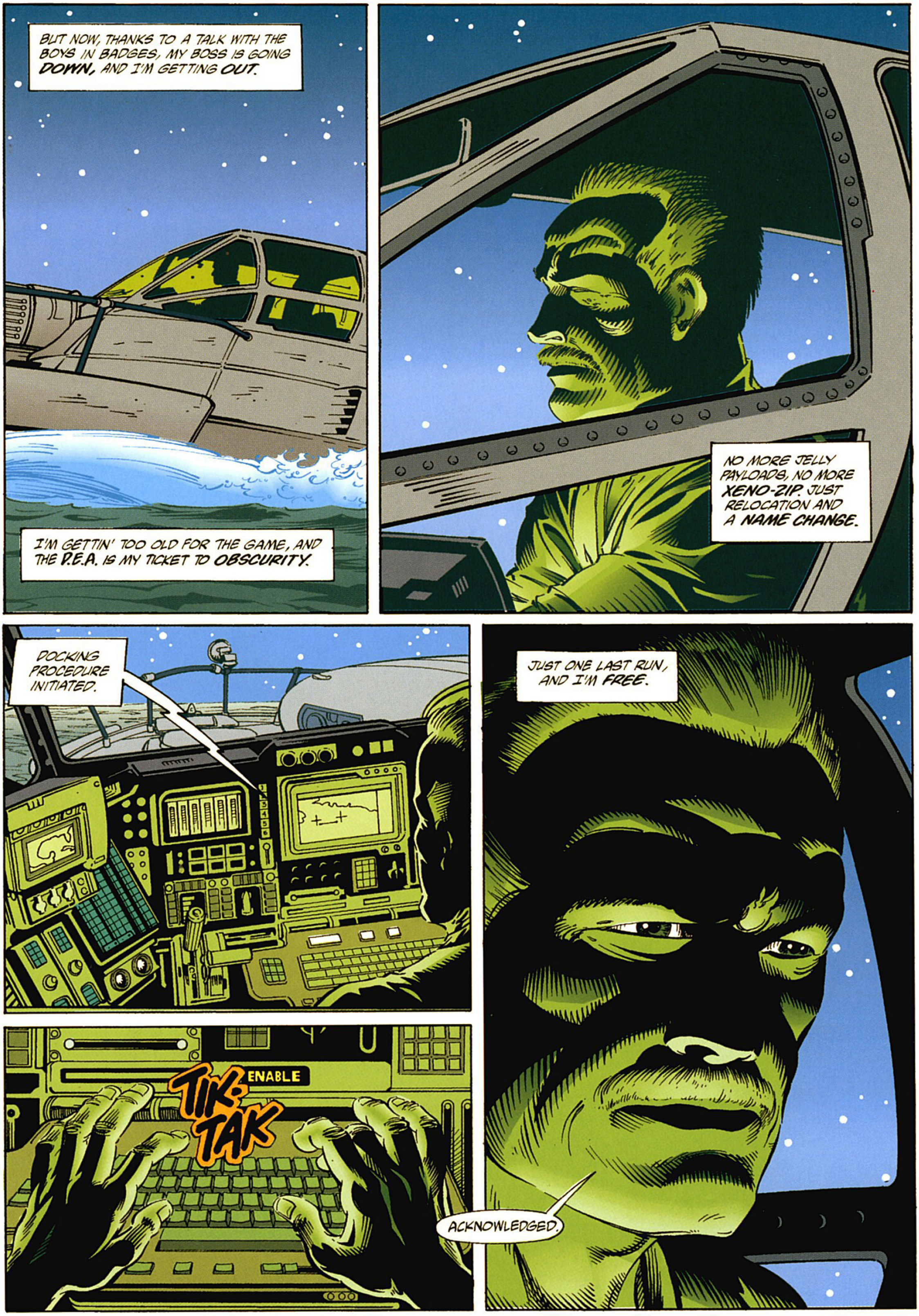
pencils
GUY DAVIS

colors
PERRY MCNAMEE

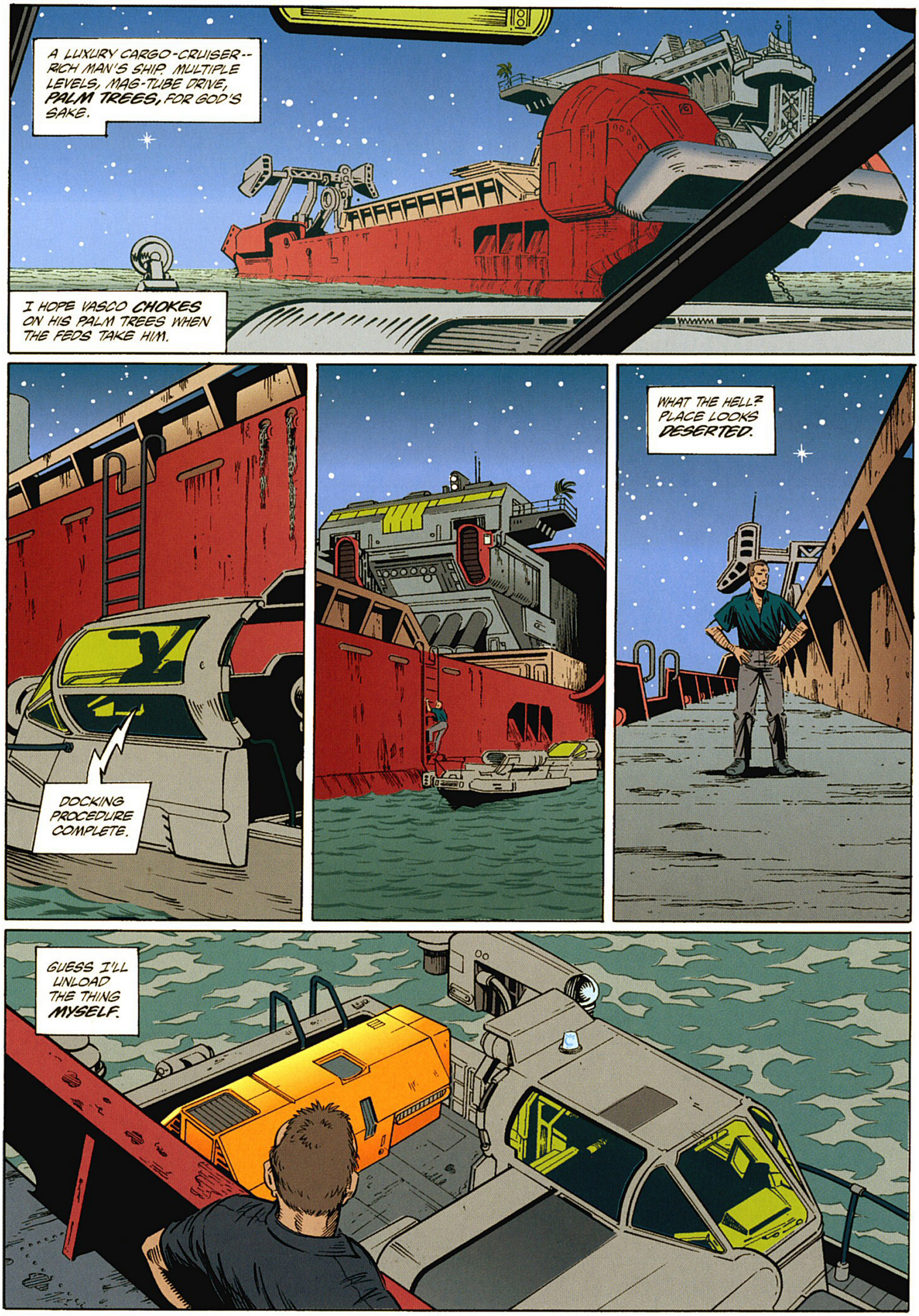
lettering
GARY FIELDS

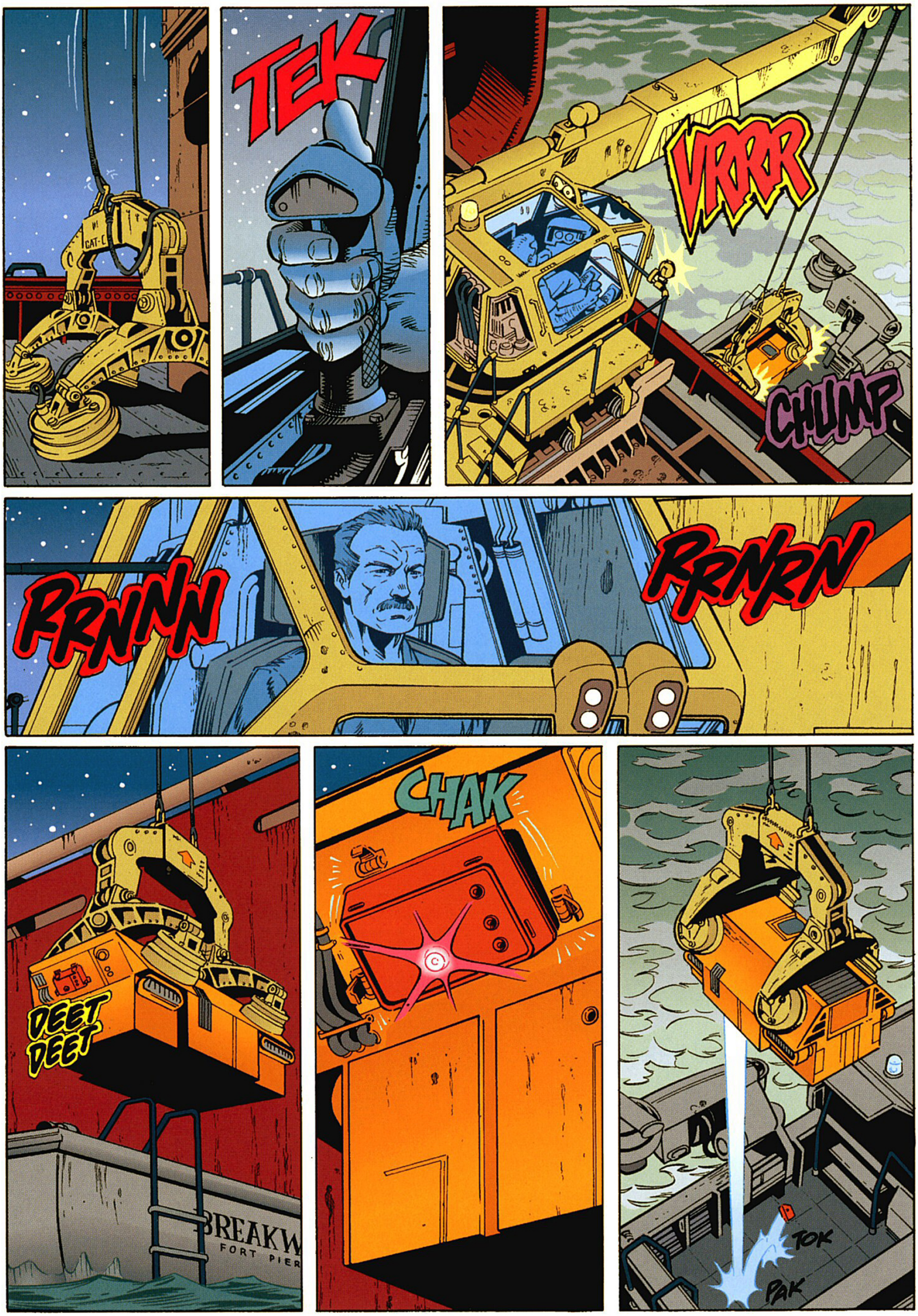
title illustration
TONY HARRIS

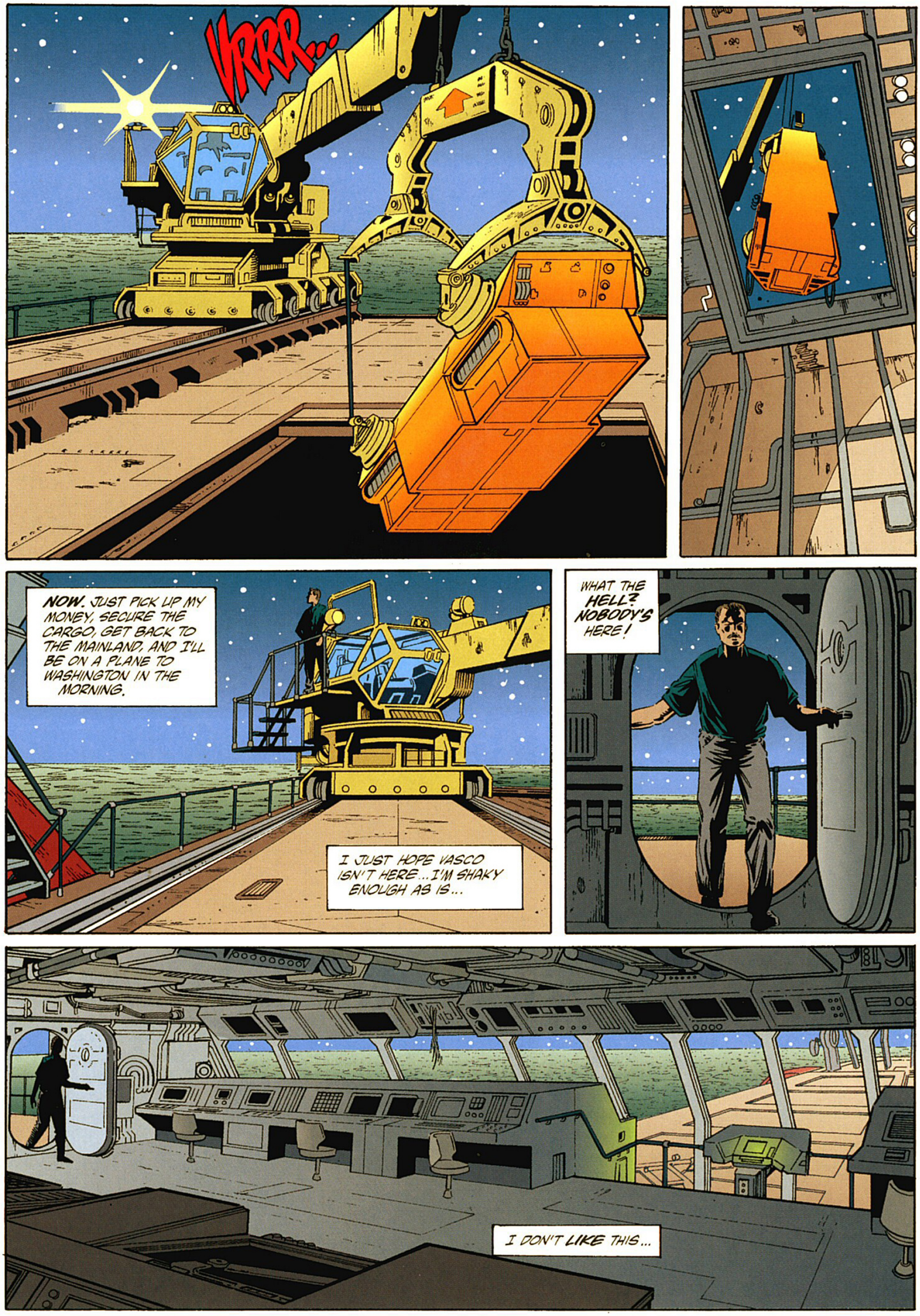

MY NAME IS GERALD COILE.
UNTIL RECENTLY, I WAS WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A SMUGGLER.
EVER SINCE THEY OUTLAWED XENO-ZIP, MY LIFE HAS BEEN ONE LONG JOY RIDE. HELL, THE CARIBBEAN'S AS MUCH A HOME TO ME AS ANYWHERE. IT WAS EASY ENOUGH TO FALL INTO. JUST A RUN HERE, A RUN THERE...



BUT NOW, THANKS TO A TALK WITH THE BOYS IN BADGES, MY BOSS IS GOING DOWN, AND I'M GETTING OUT.
I'M GETTIN' TOO OLD FOR THE GAME, AND THE D.E.A. IS MY TICKET TO OBSCURITY.
NO MORE JELLY PAYLOADS, NO MORE XENO-ZIP. JUST RELOCATION AND A NAME CHANGE.
DOCKING PROCEDURE INITIATED.
JUST ONE LAST RUN, AND I'M FREE.
ENABLE
TIK-TAK
ACKNOWLEDGED.


A LUXURY CARGO-CRUISER-- RICH MAN'S SHIP. MULTIPLE LEVELS, MAG-TUBE DRIVE, PALM TREES, FOR GOD'S SAKE.
I HOPE VASCO CHOKES ON HIS PALM TREES WHEN THE FEDS TAKE HIM.
DOCKING PROCEDURE COMPLETE.
WHAT THE HELL? PLACE LOOKS DESERTED.
GUESS I'LL UNLOAD THE THING MYSELF.

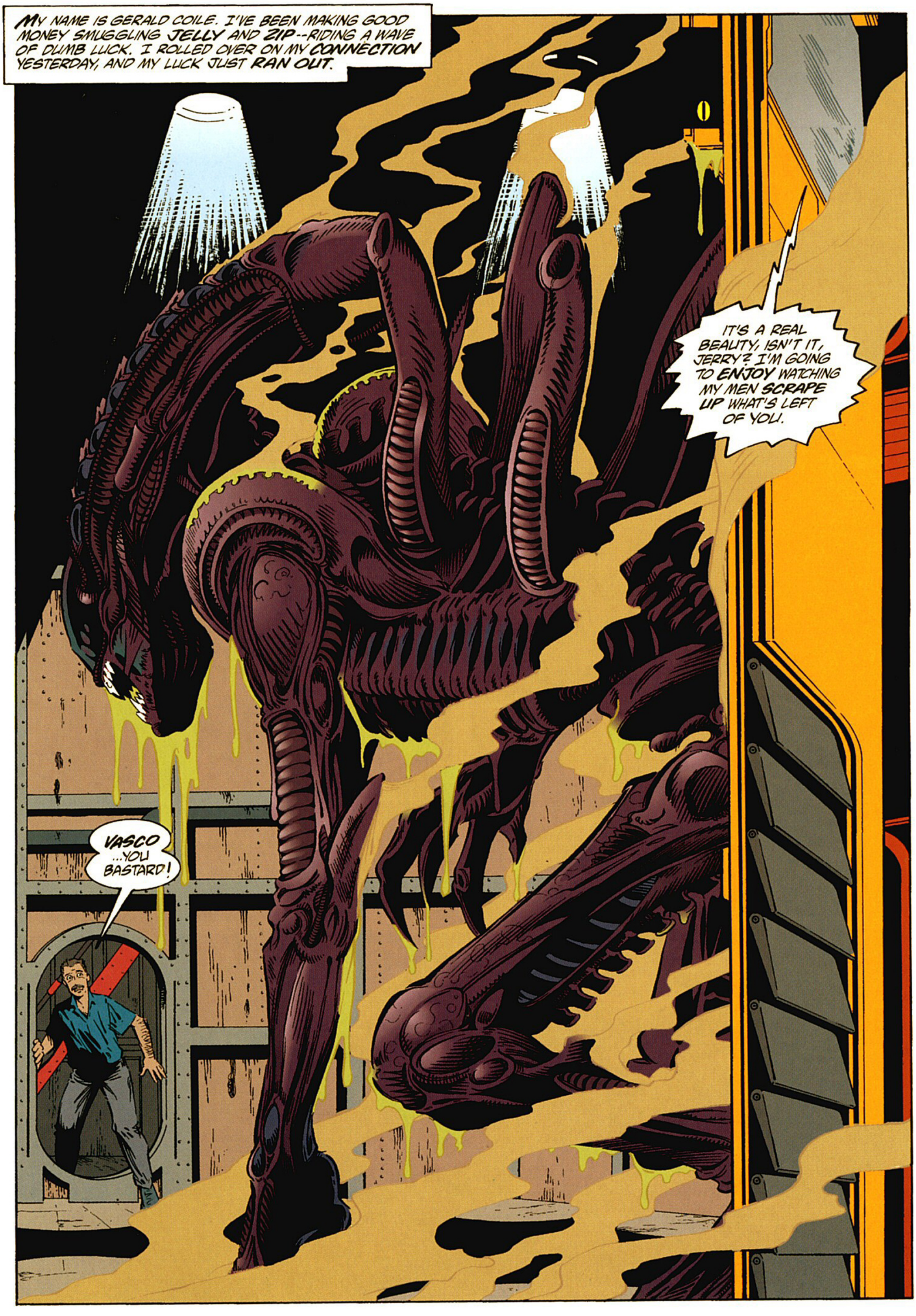

CAT-C
TEK
VRRR
CHUMP
RRNNN
RRNRN
DEET DEET
BREAKW
FORT PIER
CHAK
TOK
PAK


VRRR...
NOW. JUST PICK UP MY MONEY, SECURE THE CARGO, GET BACK TO THE MAINLAND, AND I'LL BE ON A PLANE TO WASHINGTON IN THE MORNING.
I JUST HOPE VASCO ISN'T HERE... I'M SHAKY ENOUGH AS IS...
WHAT THE HELL? NOBODY'S HERE!
I DON'T LIKE THIS...

ONLY POWER LEFT IS AUXILIARY. THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MOVE THIS TUB TWO KLICKS.
WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?
BETTER HAVE A LOOK AT THAT CARGO...
CARGO HOLD 1 OGX-3 DP
PING PING
PING PING
PRESS ENTER
OH HELL.
TEK

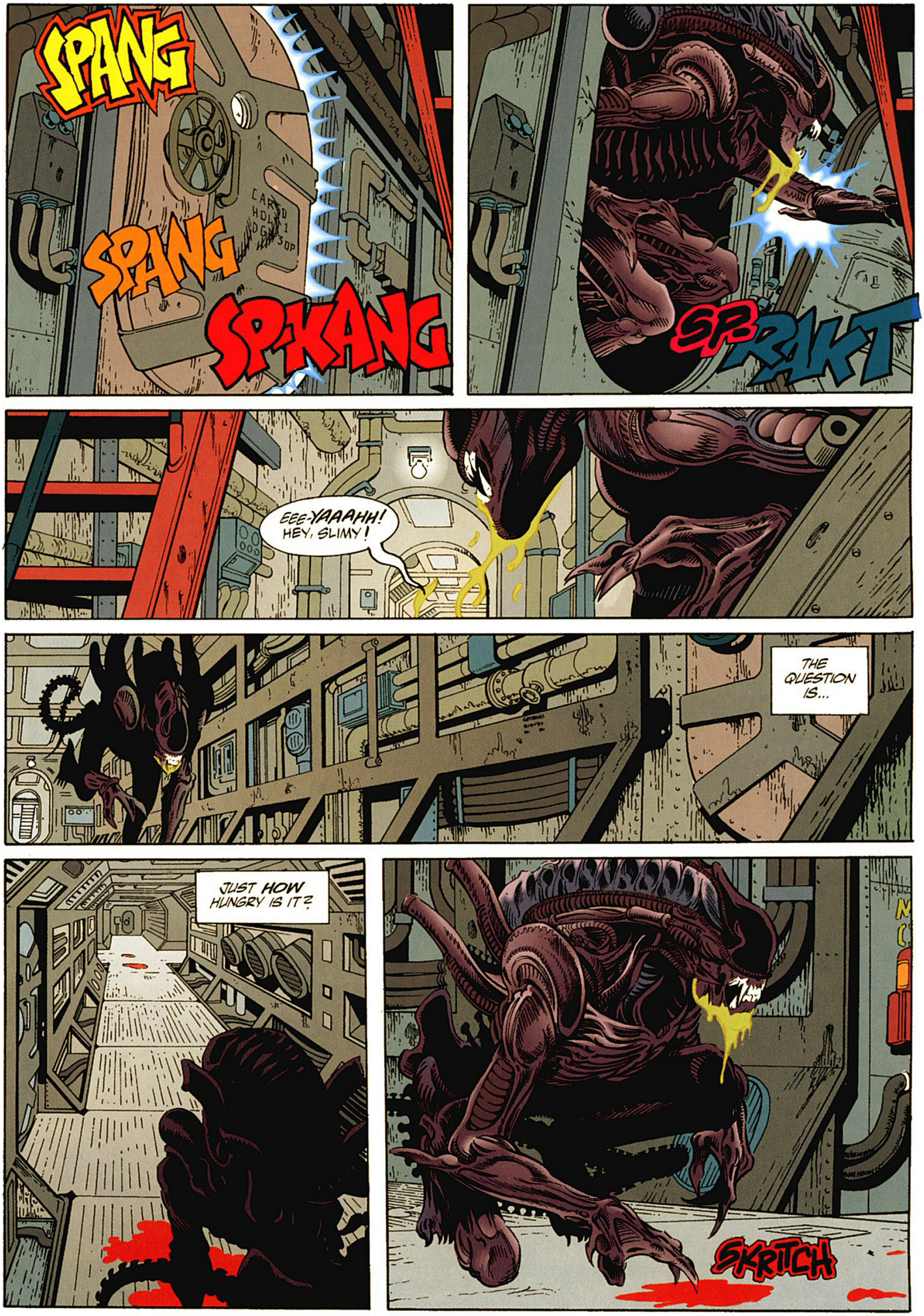
HI, JERRY. HOPE YOU ENJOYED THAT CONVERSATION WITH THE FEDS. IT WAS YOUR LAST.
YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK YOUR DINGHY. I LEFT A PRESENT BEHIND!
DEET DEET
BWA-ROOM!
MY BOAT!
NOBODY ROLLS OVER ON ME, JERRY. NOBODY!
CHAK!
FWOOOSHH
FWUMP

HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW PET, JERRY?
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT WANT TO EAT BEFORE IT GOT HOME!


MY NAME IS GERALD COILE. I'VE BEEN MAKING GOOD MONEY SMUGGLING JELLY AND ZIP--RIDING A WAVE OF DUMB LUCK. I ROLLED OVER ON MY CONNECTION YESTERDAY, AND MY LUCK JUST RAN OUT.
IT'S A REAL BEAUTY, ISN'T IT, JERRY? I'M GOING TO ENJOY WATCHING MY MEN SCRAPE UP WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU.
VASCO ...YOU BASTARD!

CLANK!
I'M DEAD.
SPANG!
OH... GOD...!
Oh God oh God oh God oh GOD...
NO WAY OUT...
C'MON, MAN, THINK!

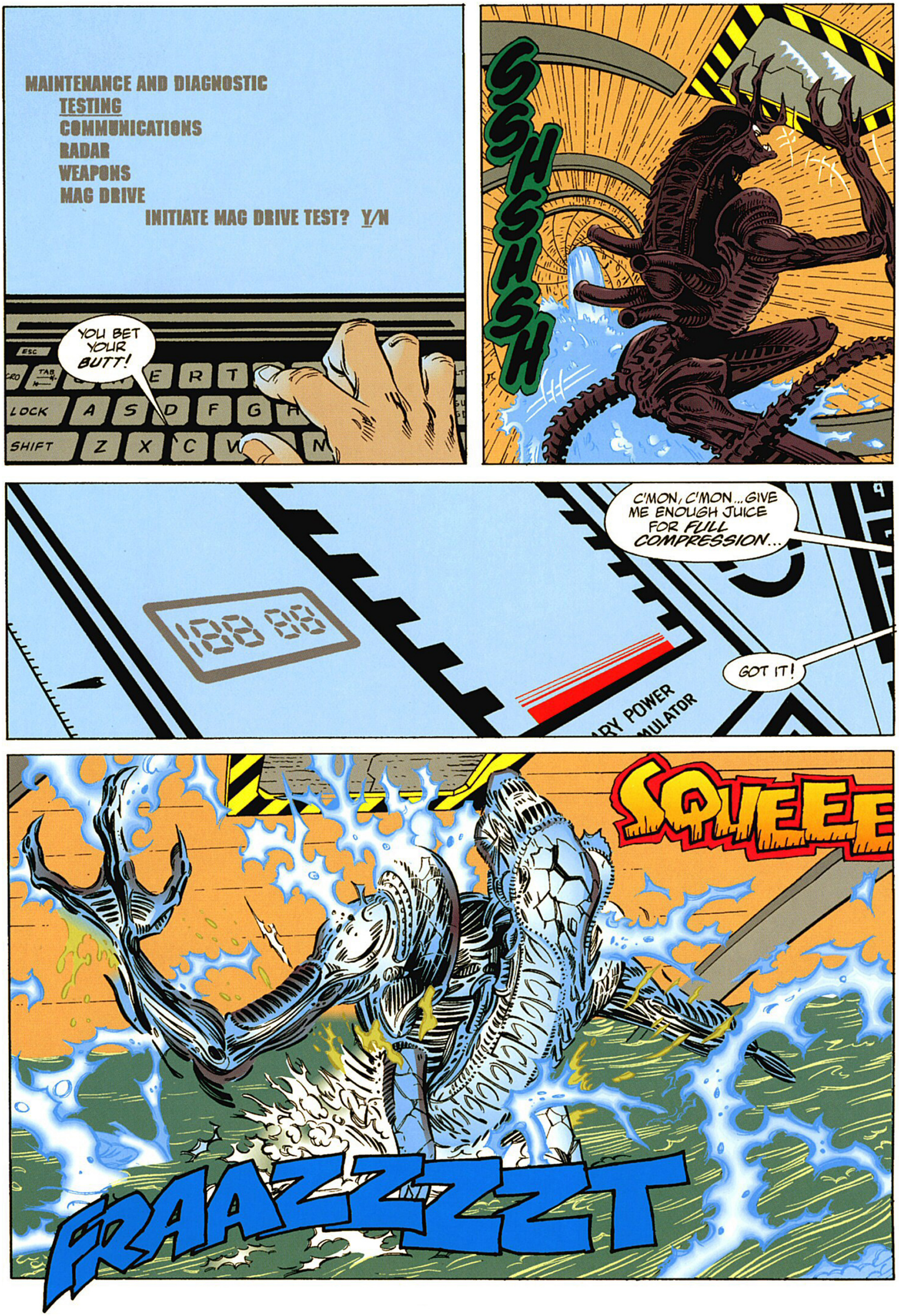
THE SHIP'S COMPUTER!
LIFEBOAT STATUS?
NO LIFEBOATS ABOARD SHIP_
WEAPONS STATUS?
NO WEAPONS ABOARD SHIP_
COMMUNICATIONS STATUS?
COMMUNICATIONS INOPERABLE_
POWER LEVEL STATUS?
MAIN REACTOR OFF-LINE. BATTERY RESERVES .08%_
COMMAND FUNCTIONS READOUT:
MAIN DRIVE—INOPERABLE
NAVIGATION—INOPERABLE
COMMUNICATIONS—INOPERABLE
THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING. SOMEWHERE I CAN GO, SOMETHING I CAN DO...
WAIT A MINUTE.



SPANG
SPANG
SP-KANG
SP-RAKT
EEE-YAAAHH! HEY, SLIMY!
THE QUESTION IS...
JUST HOW HUNGRY IS IT?
SKRITCH

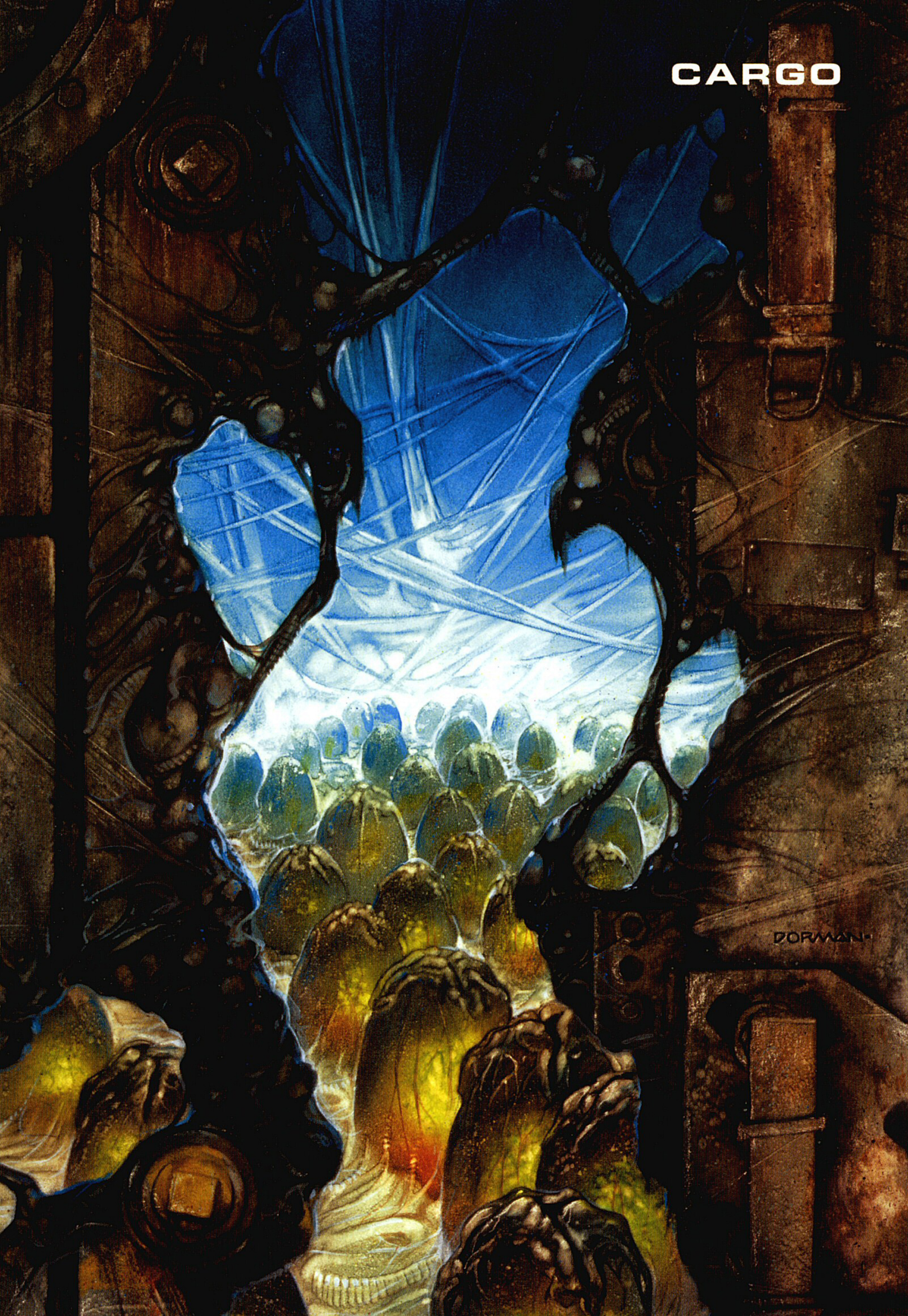
WILL IT FOLLOW A SIMPLE TRAIL OF BLOOD?
OR COME LOOKING FOR ME?
HISSSSSS

YES...
IN THE MAG TUBE!
SHUNK
CAUTION
YEAH!


MAINTENANCE AND DIAGNOSTIC
TESTING
COMMUNICATIONS
RADAR
WEAPONS
MAG DRIVE
INITIATE MAG DRIVE TEST? Y/N
YOU BET YOUR BUTT!
SSHSHSH
C'MON, C'MON... GIVE ME ENOUGH JUICE FOR FULL COMPRESSION...
GOT IT!
SQUEEE
FRAAZZZZT

IN TIME...
AH, MR. VASCO? YOU'VE GOT A PACKAGE HERE. FROM A MR. COILE. JUST CAME IN.
COILE...? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
GERALD COILE IS BUG FOOD BY NOW--
AAIIEE!
SURPRISE

CARGO



script
DAN JOLLEY

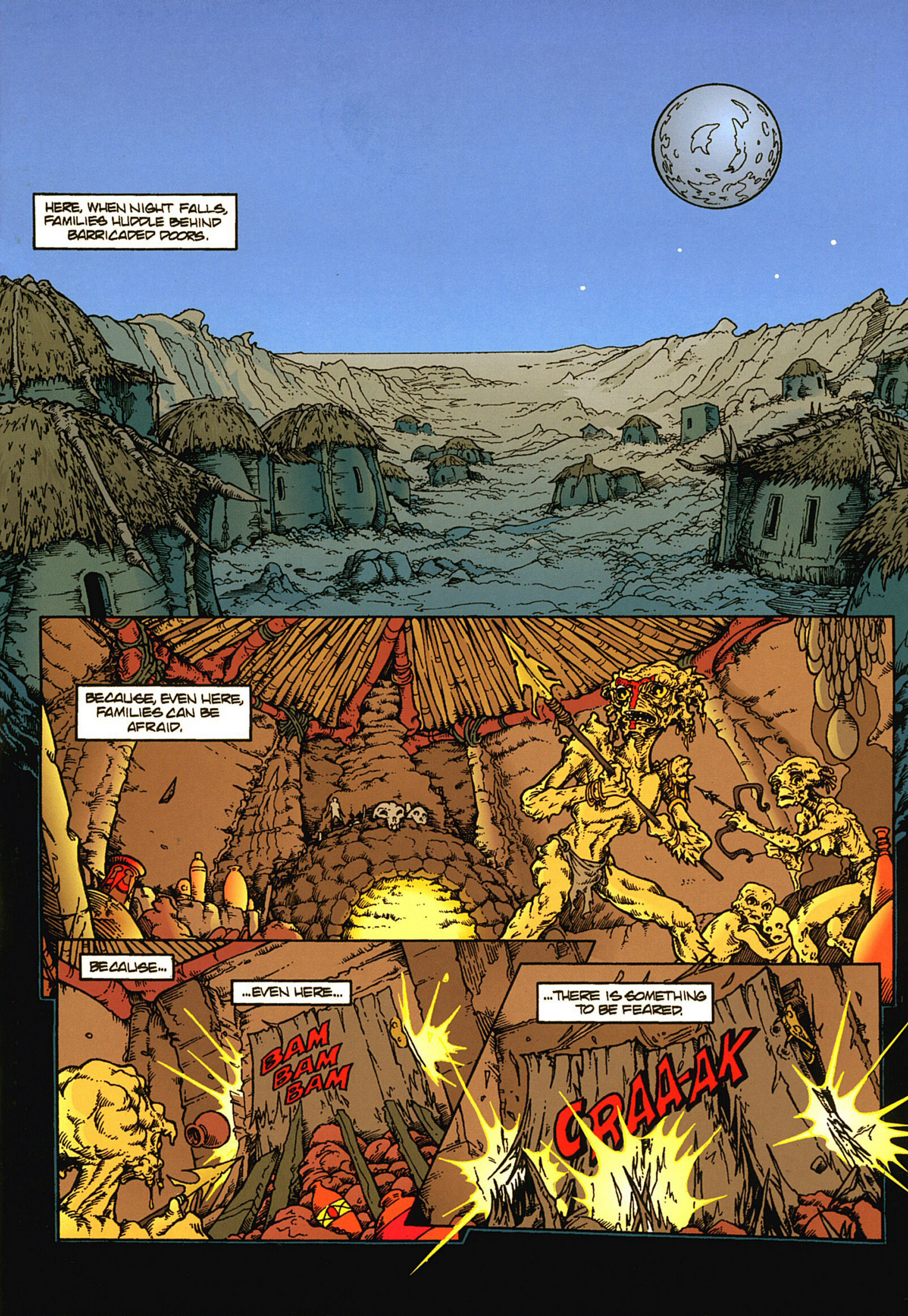
pencils
JOHN NADEAU

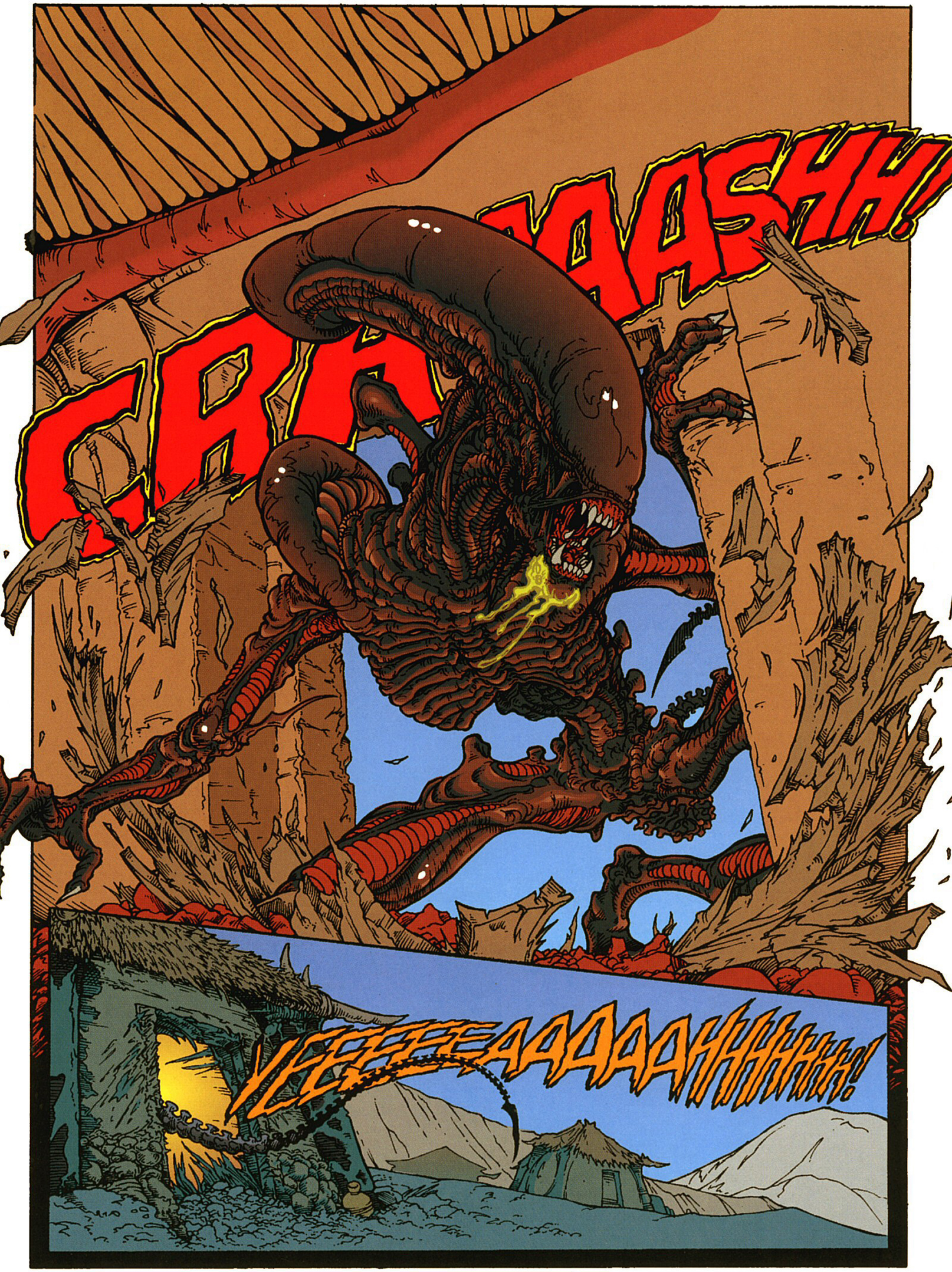
inks
TERRY PALLOT

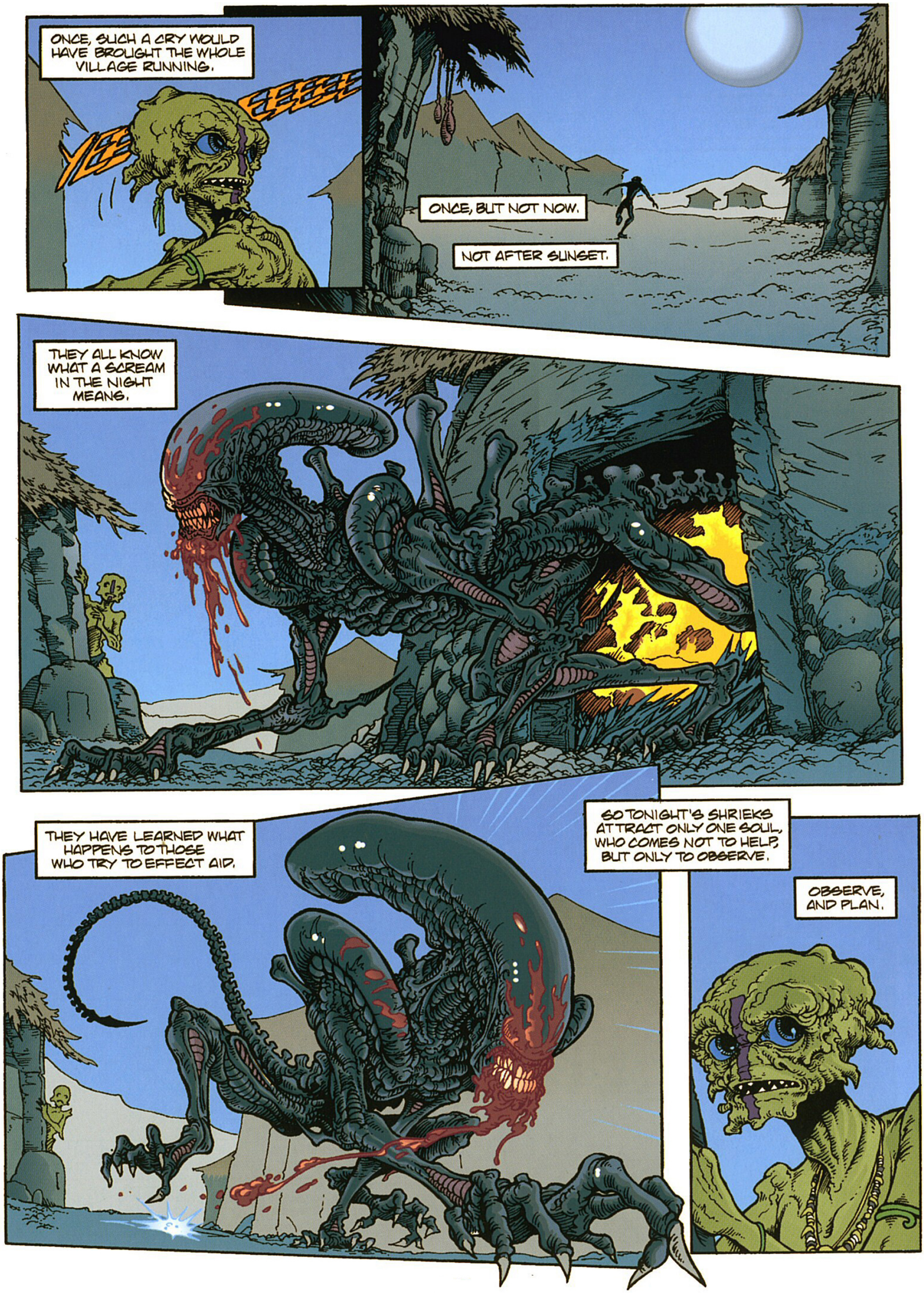
colors
JAMES SINCLAIR

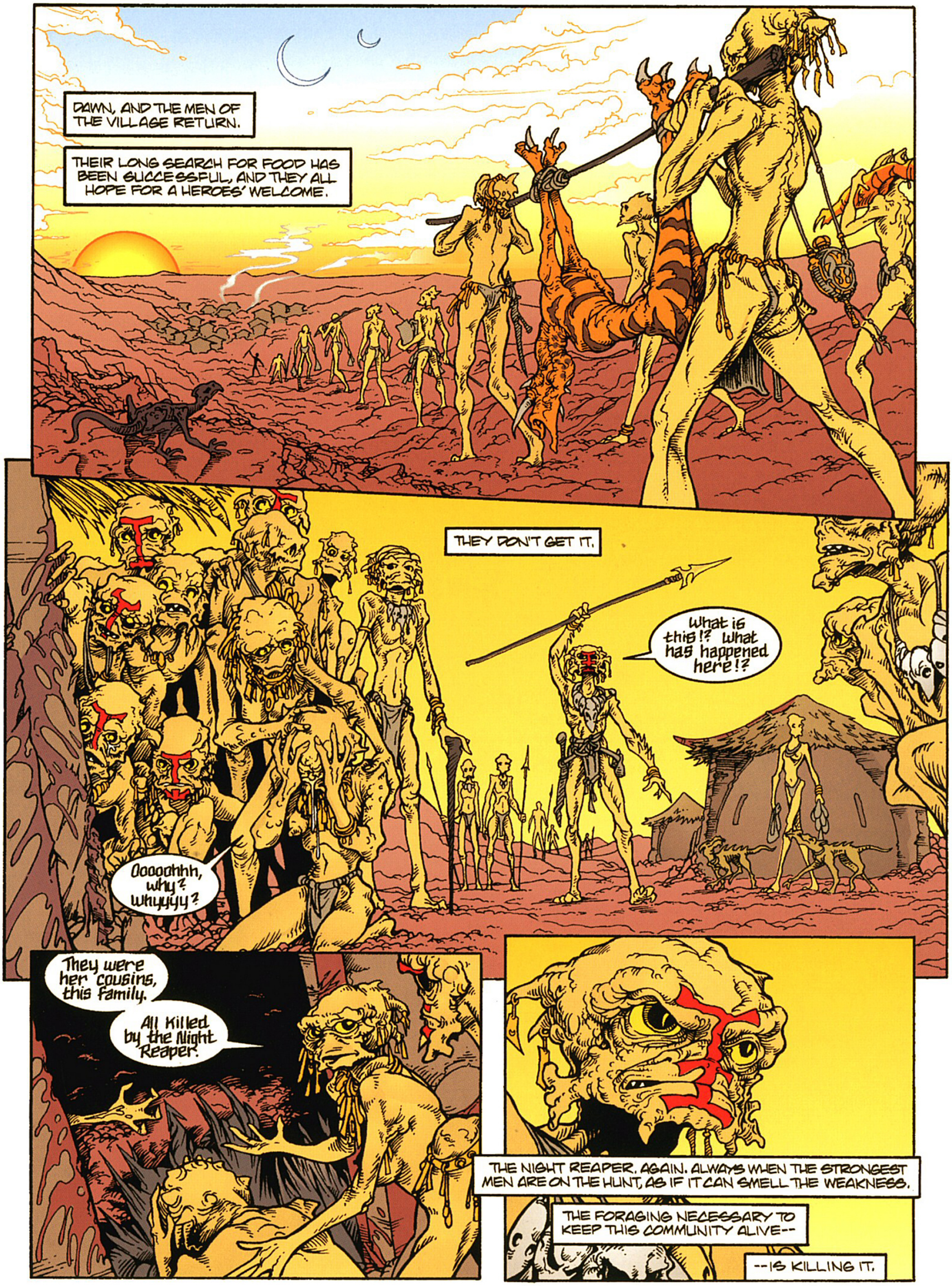
lettering
CLEM ROBINS

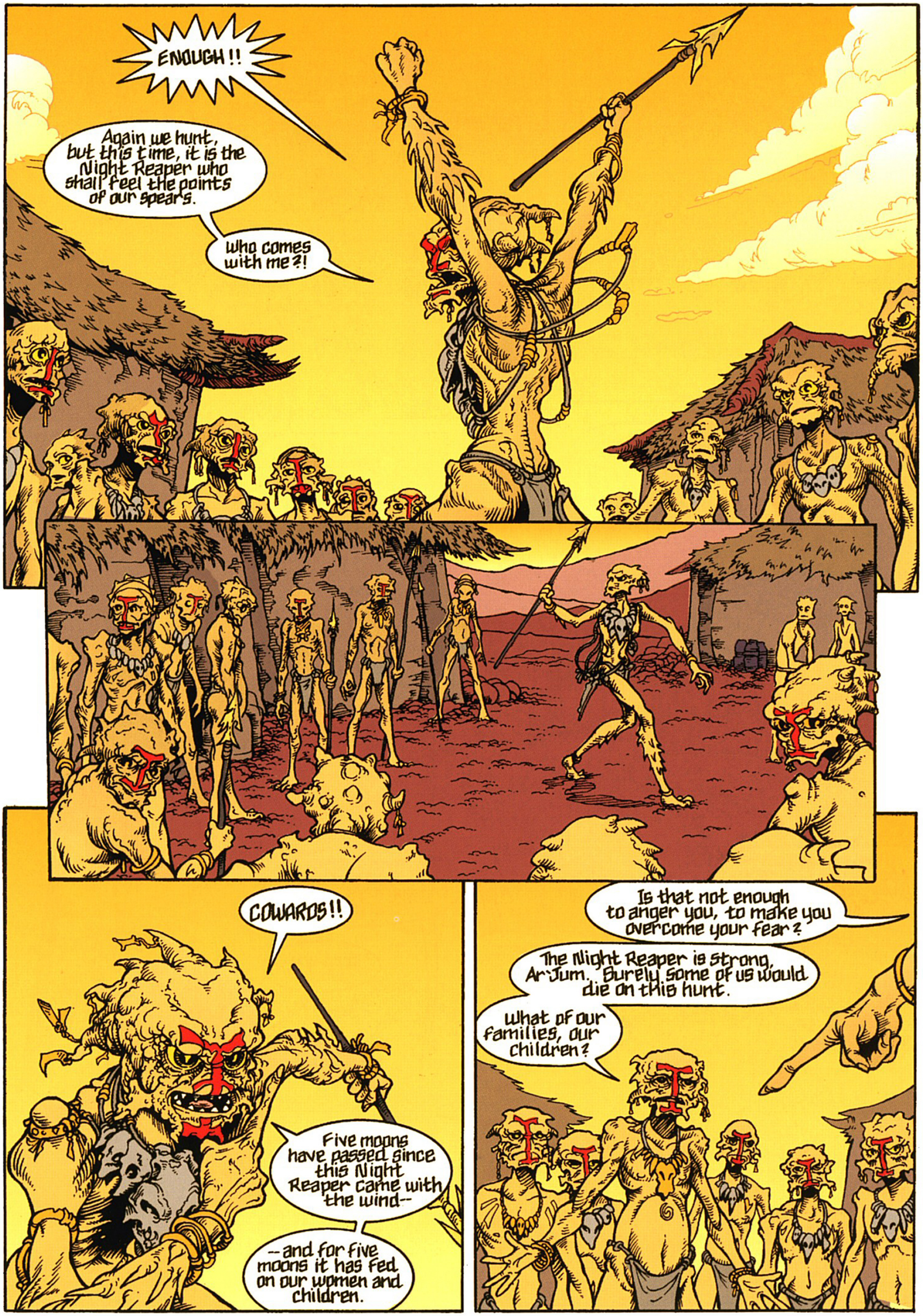
title illustration
DAVE DORMAN


HERE, WHEN NIGHT FALLS, FAMILIES HUDDLE BEHIND BARRICADED DOORS.
BECAUSE, EVEN HERE, FAMILIES CAN BE AFRAID.
BECAUSE...
...EVEN HERE...
BAM BAM BAM
...THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE FEARED.
CRAA-AK

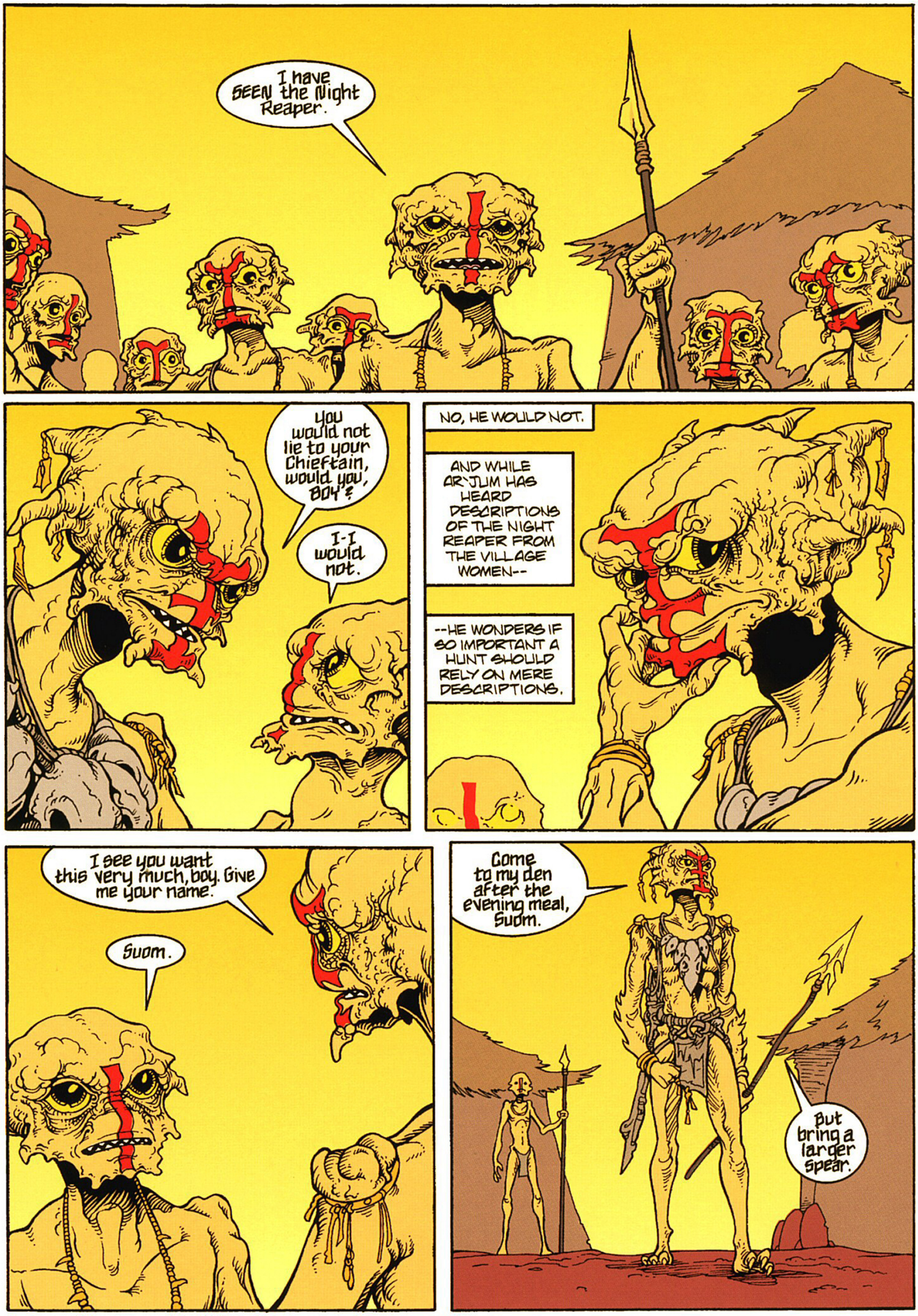

CRAAAASHH!
YEEEEEAAAAAHHHHHHH!

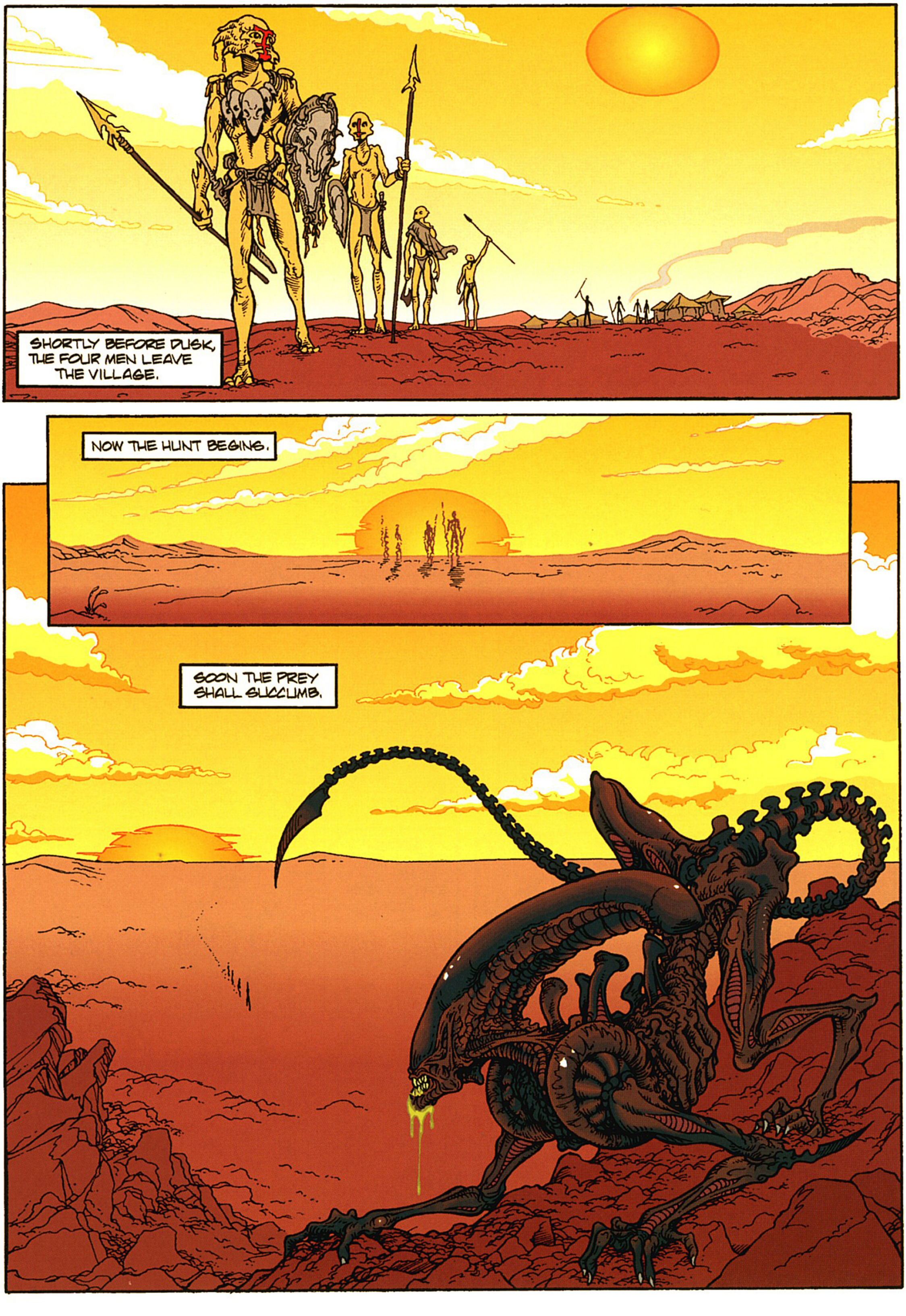

ONCE, SUCH A CRY WOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE WHOLE VILLAGE RUNNING.
YEEEEEEE
ONCE, BUT NOT NOW.
NOT AFTER SUNSET.
THEY ALL KNOW WHAT A SCREAM IN THE NIGHT MEANS.
THEY HAVE LEARNED WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO TRY TO EFFECT AID.
SO TONIGHT'S SHRIEKS ATTRACT ONLY ONE SOUL, WHO COMES NOT TO HELP, BUT ONLY TO OBSERVE.
OBSERVE, AND PLAN.

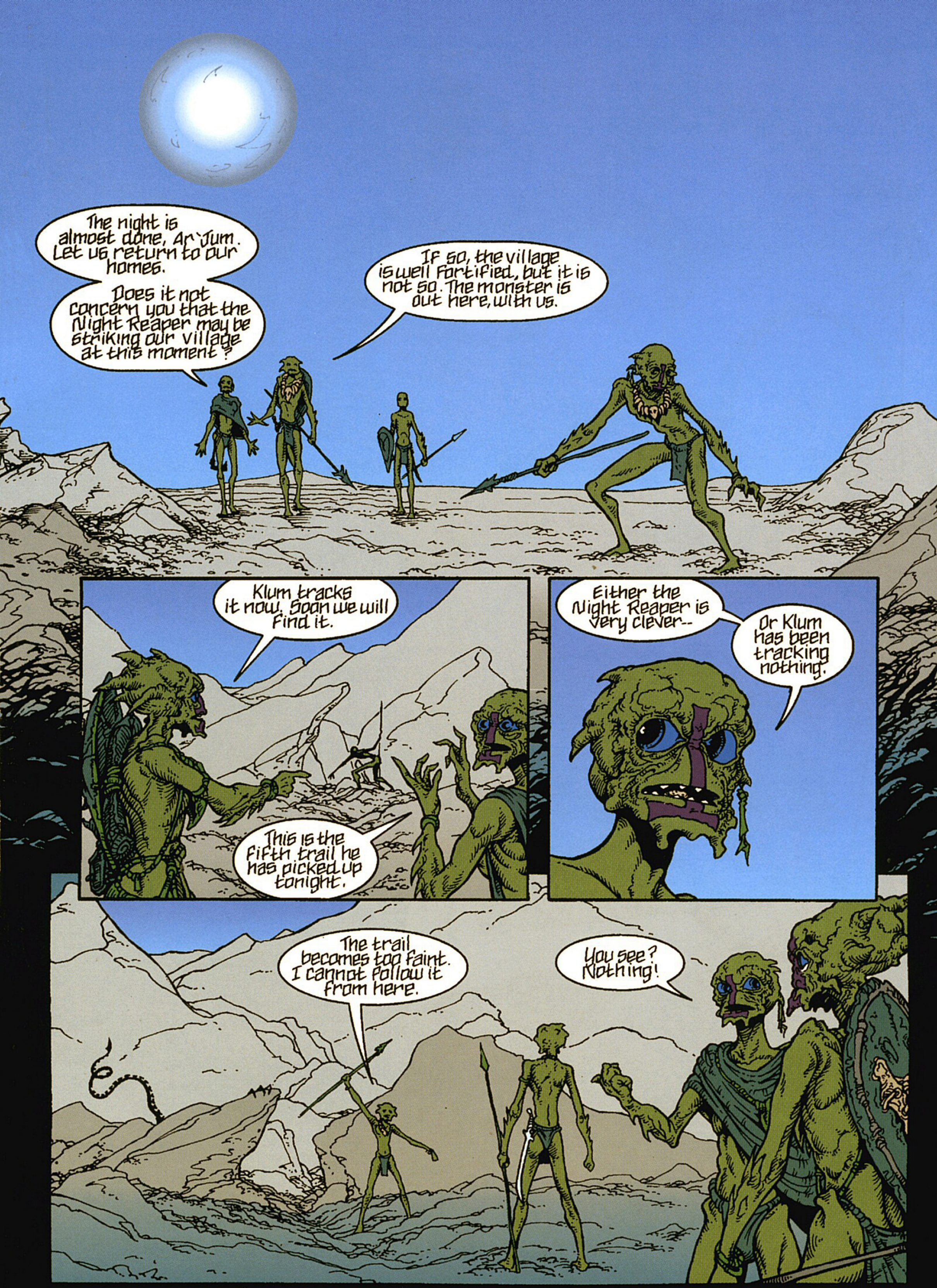

DAWN, AND THE MEN OF THE VILLAGE RETURN.
THEIR LONG SEARCH FOR FOOD HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, AND THEY ALL HOPE FOR A HEROES' WELCOME.
THEY DON'T GET IT.
What is this!? What has happened here!?
Ooooohhh, why? Whyyyy?
They were her cousins, this family.
All killed by the Night Reaper.
THE NIGHT REAPER. AGAIN. ALWAYS WHEN THE STRONGEST MEN ARE ON THE HUNT, AS IF IT CAN SMELL THE WEAKNESS.
THE FORAGING NECESSARY TO KEEP THIS COMMUNITY ALIVE--
--IS KILLING IT.

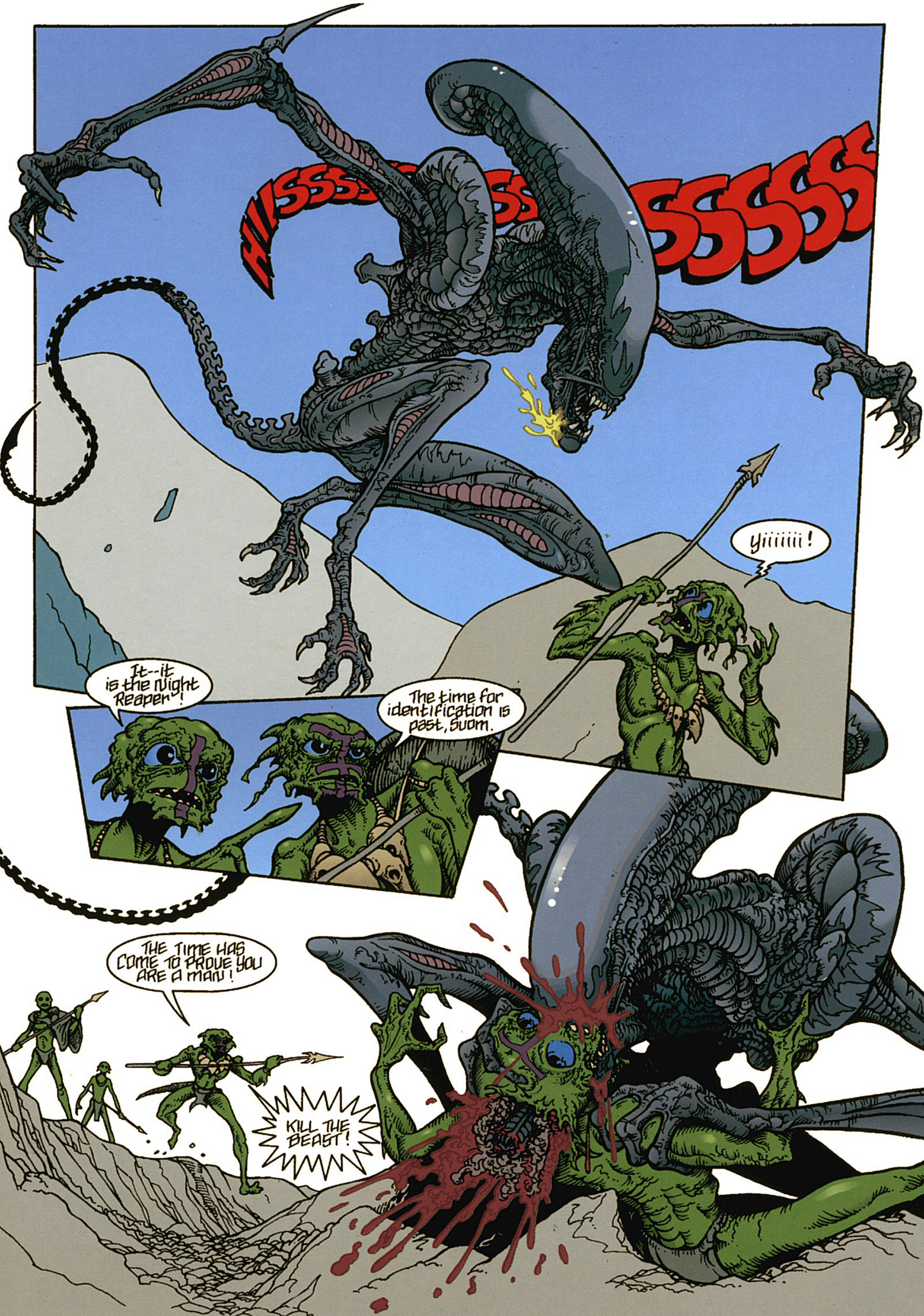

ENOUGH!!
Again we hunt, but this time, it is the Night Reaper who shall feel the points of our spears.
Who comes with me?!
COWARDS!!
Five moons have passed since this Night Reaper came with the wind--
--and for five moons it has fed on our women and children.
Is that not enough to anger you, to make you overcome your fear?
The Night Reaper is strong, Ar-Jum. Surely some of us would die on this hunt.
What of our families, our children?

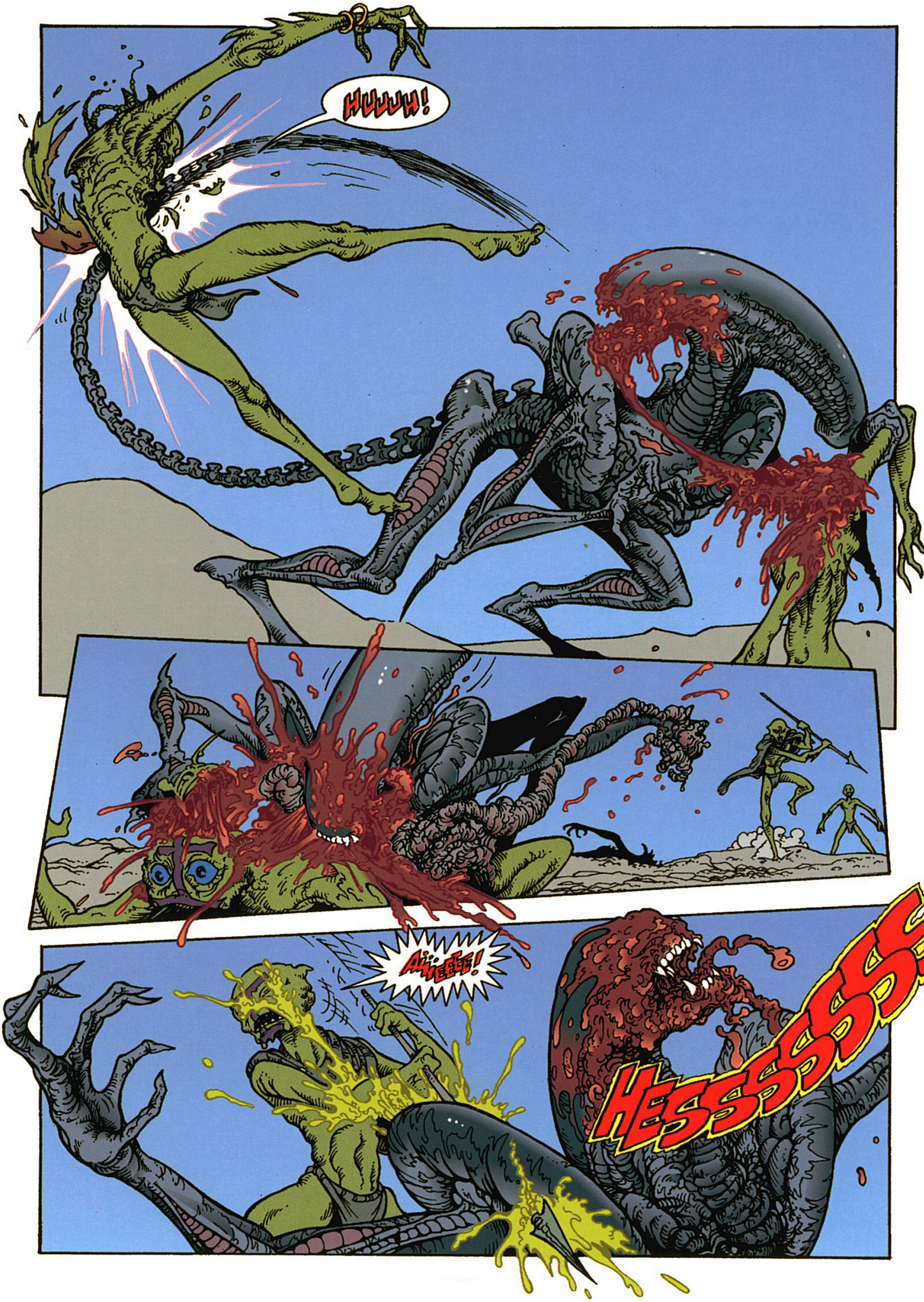
A sound argument, for the village is small.
Strong males are in short supply here.
Shius, Klum. You have no more families.
You go with me.
I also shall go.
Eh?
This is no game we play, BOY.
I am no boy.
I have almost eighteen summers.
Perhaps, but your mark shows me that you have not made a life, or taken a life.
These things make a man, not time.
Then I soon will become a man, for you need me on this hunt.
Need you? Why?

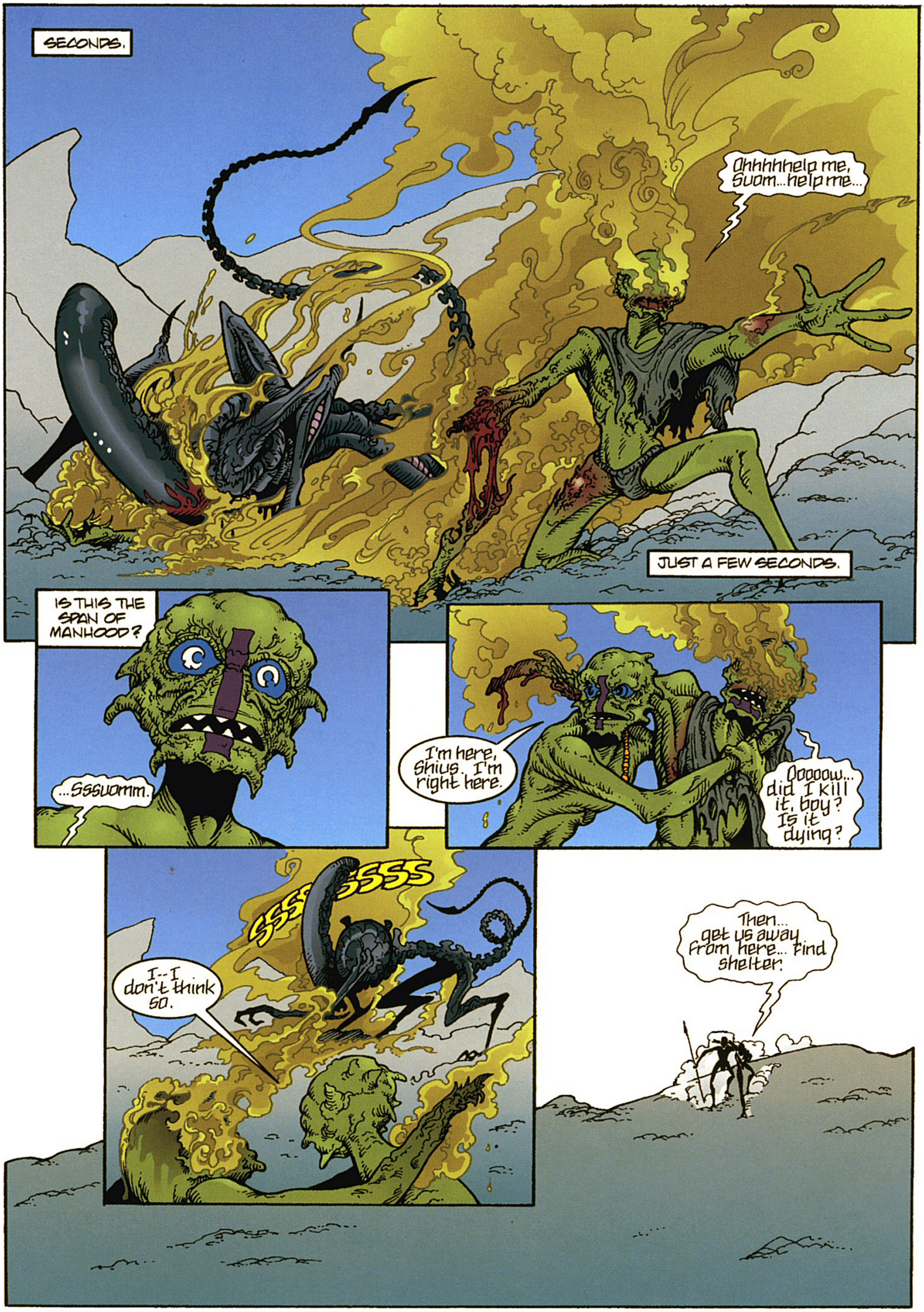

I have SEEN the Night Reaper.
You would not lie to your Chieftain, would you, Boy?
I-I would not.
NO, HE WOULD NOT.
AND WHILE AR'JUM HAS HEARD DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NIGHT REAPER FROM THE VILLAGE WOMEN--
--HE WONDERS IF SO IMPORTANT A HUNT SHOULD RELY ON MERE DESCRIPTIONS.
I see you want this very much, boy. Give me your name.
Suom.
Come to my den after the evening meal, Suom.
But bring a larger spear.

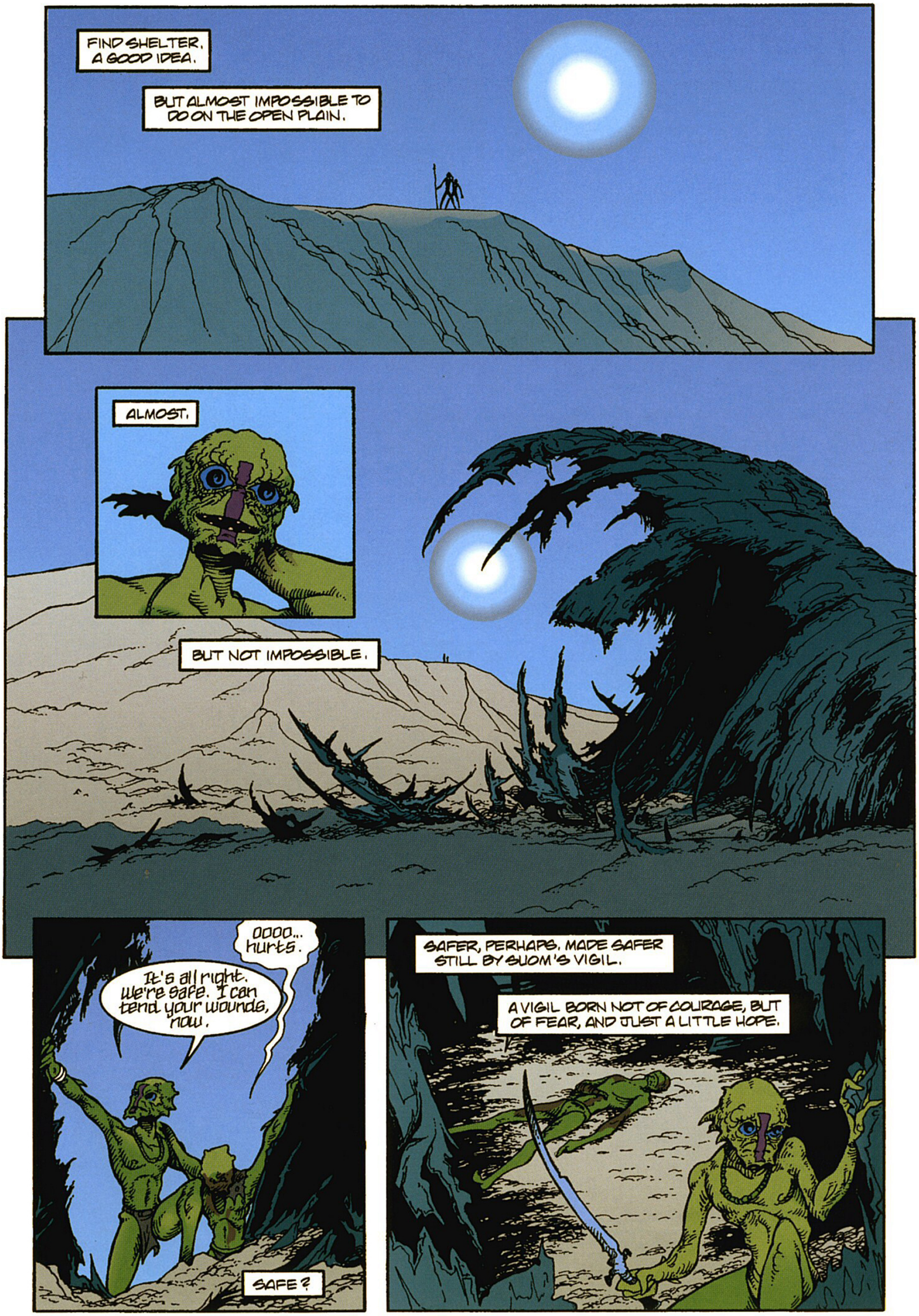

SHORTLY BEFORE DUSK, THE FOUR MEN LEAVE THE VILLAGE.
NOW THE HUNT BEGINS.
SOON THE PREY SHALL SUCCUMB.


The night is almost done, Ar'Jum. Let us return to our homes.
Does it not concern you that the Night Reaper may be striking our village at this moment?
If so, the village is well fortified, but it is not so. The monster is out here, with us.
Klum tracks it now. Soon we will find it.
This is the fifth trail he has picked up tonight.
Either the Night Reaper is very clever--
Or Klum has been tracking nothing.
The trail becomes too faint. I cannot follow it from here.
You see? Nothing!


HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
Yiiiiii!
It--it is the Night Reaper!
The time for identification is past, Suom.
THE TIME HAS COME TO PROVE YOU ARE A MAN!
KILL THE BEAST!

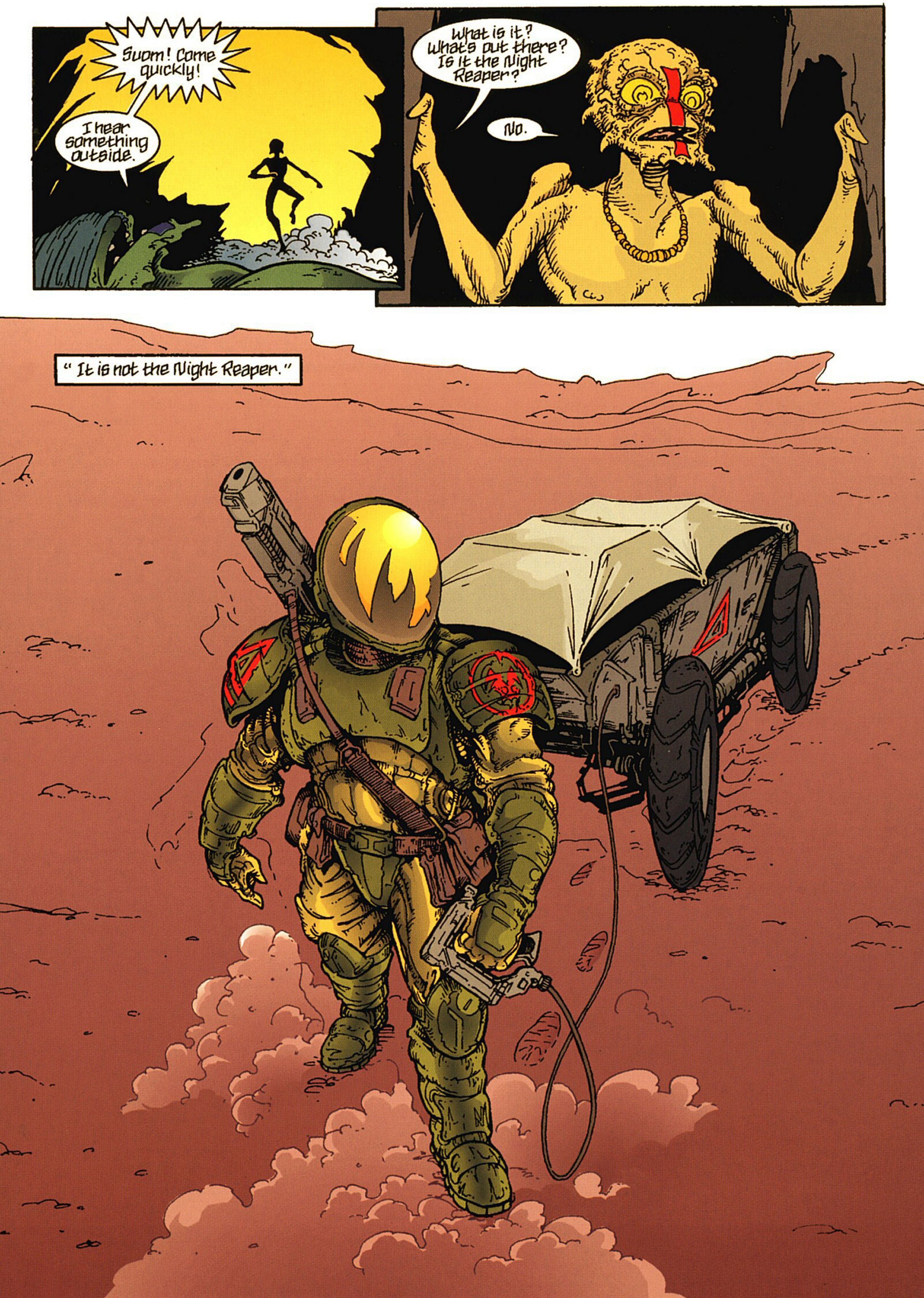

HUUUH!
AIIIEEEE!
HESSSSSSS


SECONDS.
Ohhhhhelp me, Suom...help me...
JUST A FEW SECONDS.
IS THIS THE SPAN OF MANHOOD?
...Sssuomm.
I'm here, Shius. I'm right here.
Oooow... did I kill it, boy? Is it dying?
SSSSSSSS
I--I don't think so.
Then... get us away from here... find shelter.


FIND SHELTER, A GOOD IDEA.
BUT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ON THE OPEN PLAIN.
ALMOST.
BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.
It's all right. We're safe. I can tend your wounds, now.
oooo... hurts.
SAFE?
SAFER, PERHAPS. MADE SAFER STILL BY SUOM'S VIGIL.
A VIGIL BORN NOT OF COURAGE, BUT OF FEAR, AND JUST A LITTLE HOPE.

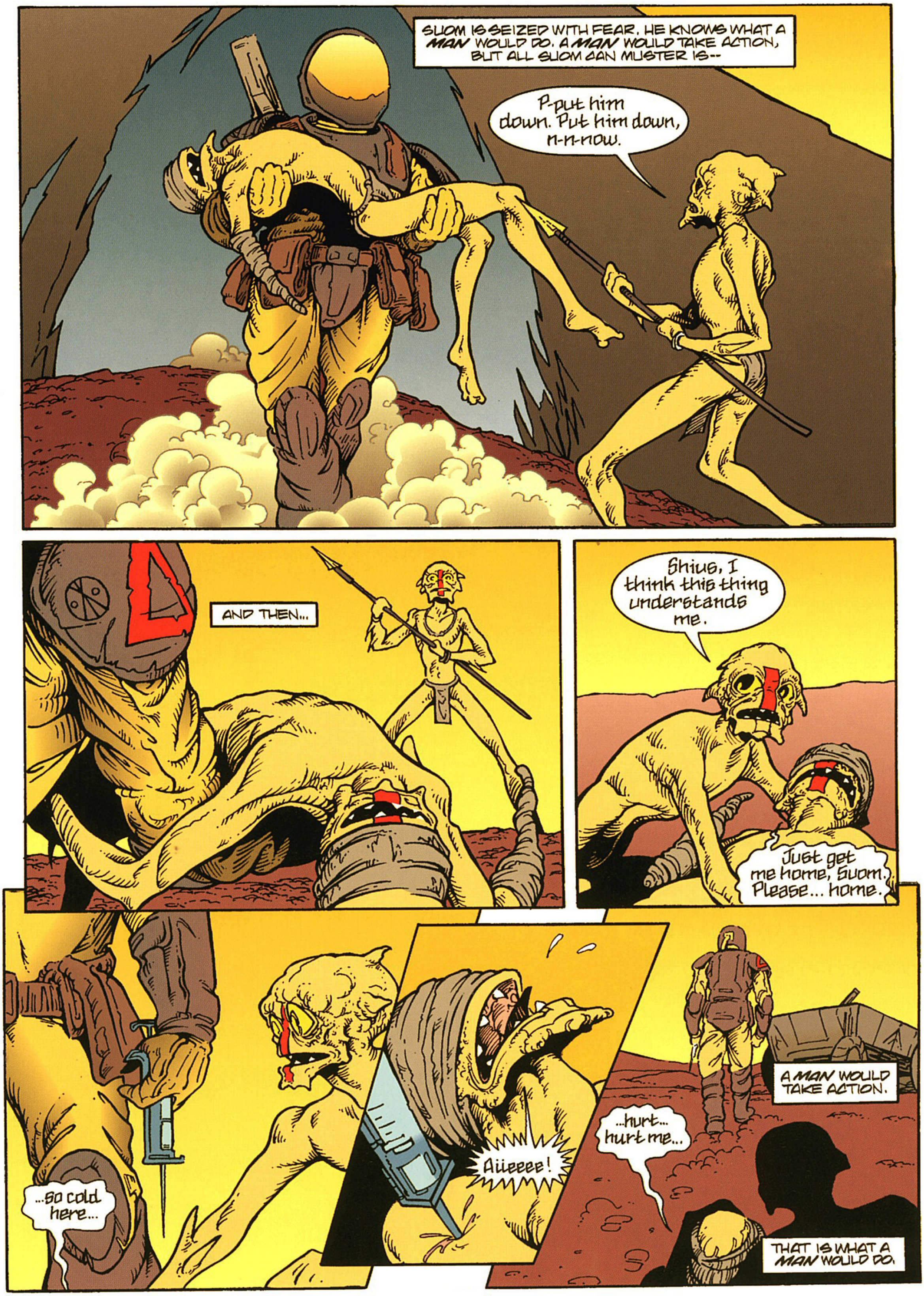
A HOPE THAT GROWS AS THE FEAR MELTS IN THE RAYS OF THE RISING SUN.
YAWWN
Huh?
What...
...is...
...this place?
Suom, are you there?
Right here, Shius. How do you feel?
Very, very cold. Where are we?
I don't really know.

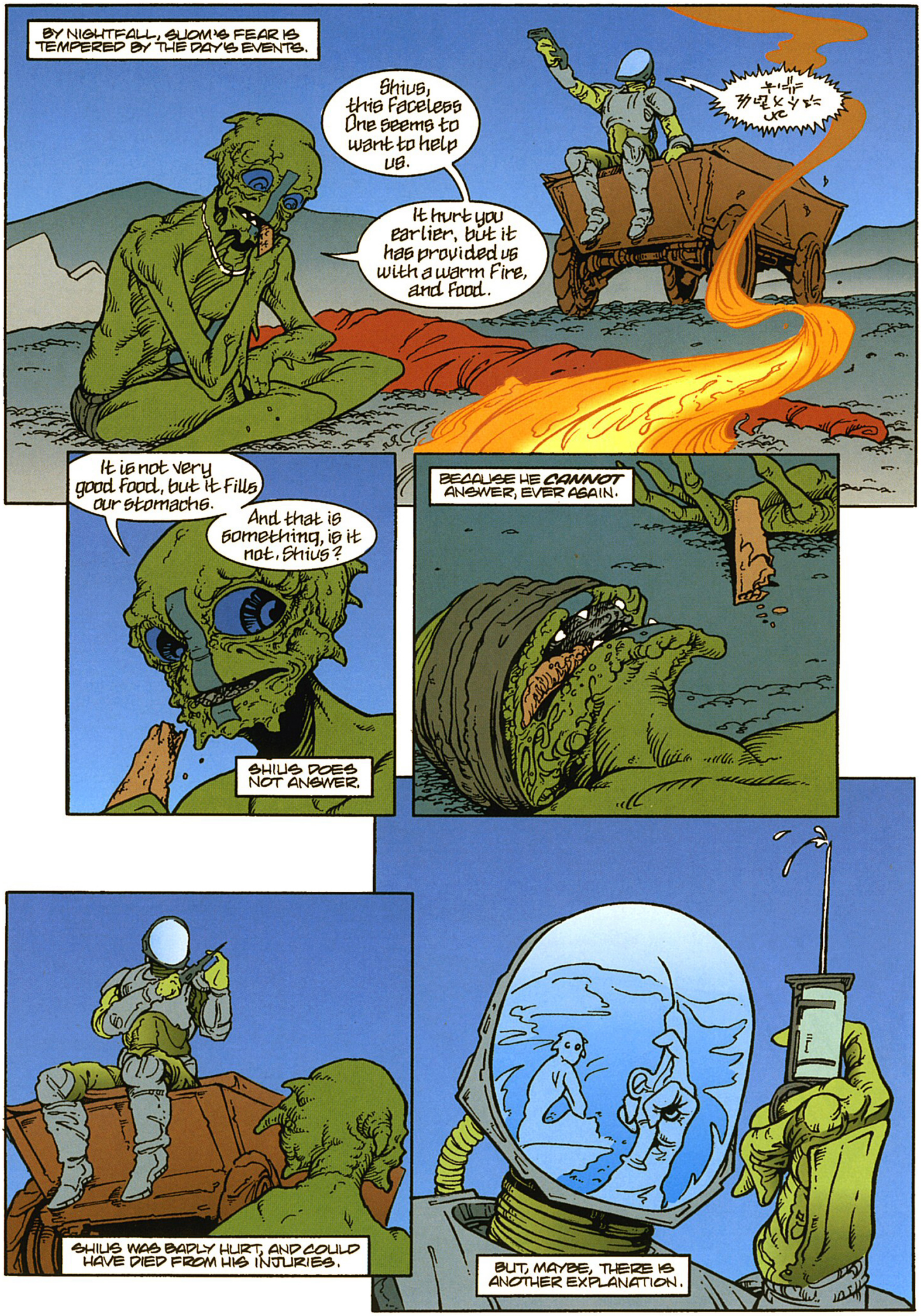
IT IS A STRANGE PLACE, THIS SHELTER.
FULL OF STRANGE THINGS.
THINGS THIS BOY HAS NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
AND THINGS BETTER LEFT UNSEEN.



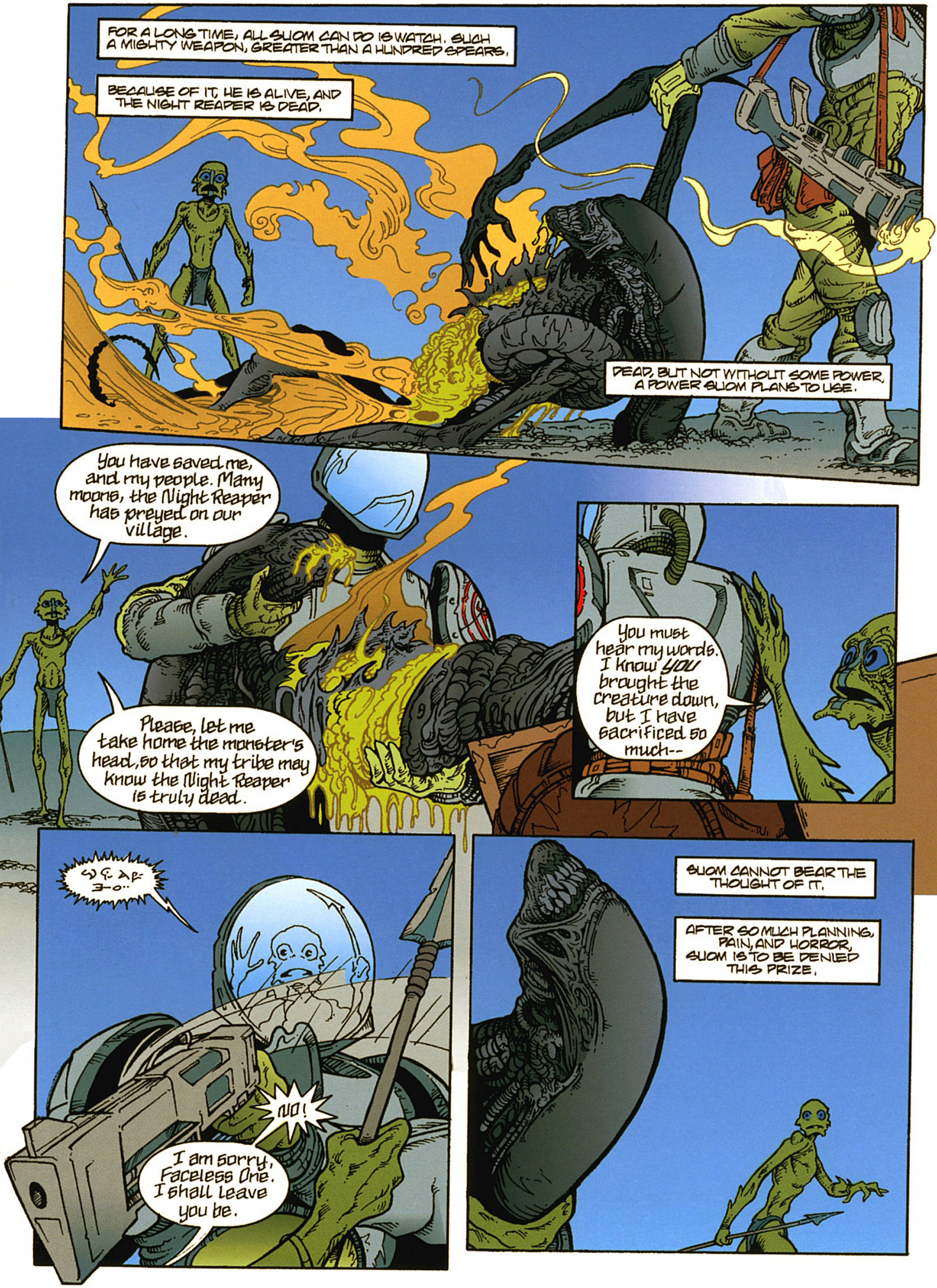
Suom! Come quickly!
I hear something outside.
What is it? What's out there? Is it the Night Reaper?
No.
" It is not the Night Reaper."

WHAT SORT OF MONSTER IS THIS? IT SQUEALS AND HISSES, AS IF ATTACKING, YET IT MOVES SLOWLY, ALMOST FEARFULLY.
SUOM IS PUZZLED. PERHAPS THIS IS SOME SORT OF TRICK, OR PERHAPS THIS FACELESS BEAST IS TRULY HARMLESS.
Suom, are you there?
What is that noise?
A-- a strange creature is here with us--
--but, I don't think it is dangerous.
BEEP-A-BEEP
Strange creature?!
Help me, Suom!
Don't let it take me!

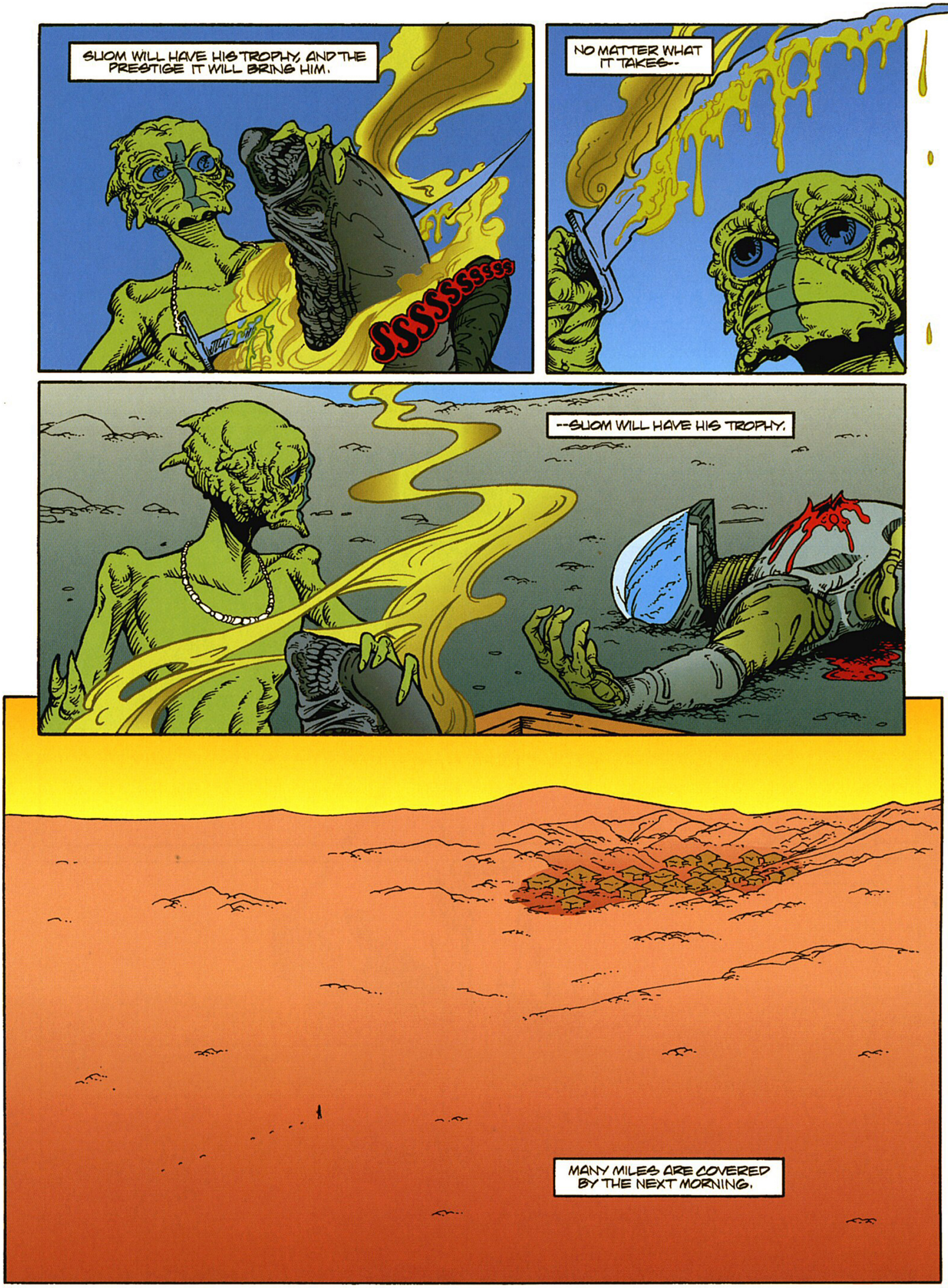

SUOM IS SEIZED WITH FEAR. HE KNOWS WHAT A MAN WOULD DO. A MAN WOULD TAKE ACTION, BUT ALL SUOM CAN MUSTER IS--
P-put him down. Put him down, n-n-now.
AND THEN...
Shius, I think this thing understands me.
Just get me home, Suom. Please... home.
...so cold here...
Aiieeee!
...hurt... hurt me...
A MAN WOULD TAKE ACTION.
THAT IS WHAT A MAN WOULD DO.

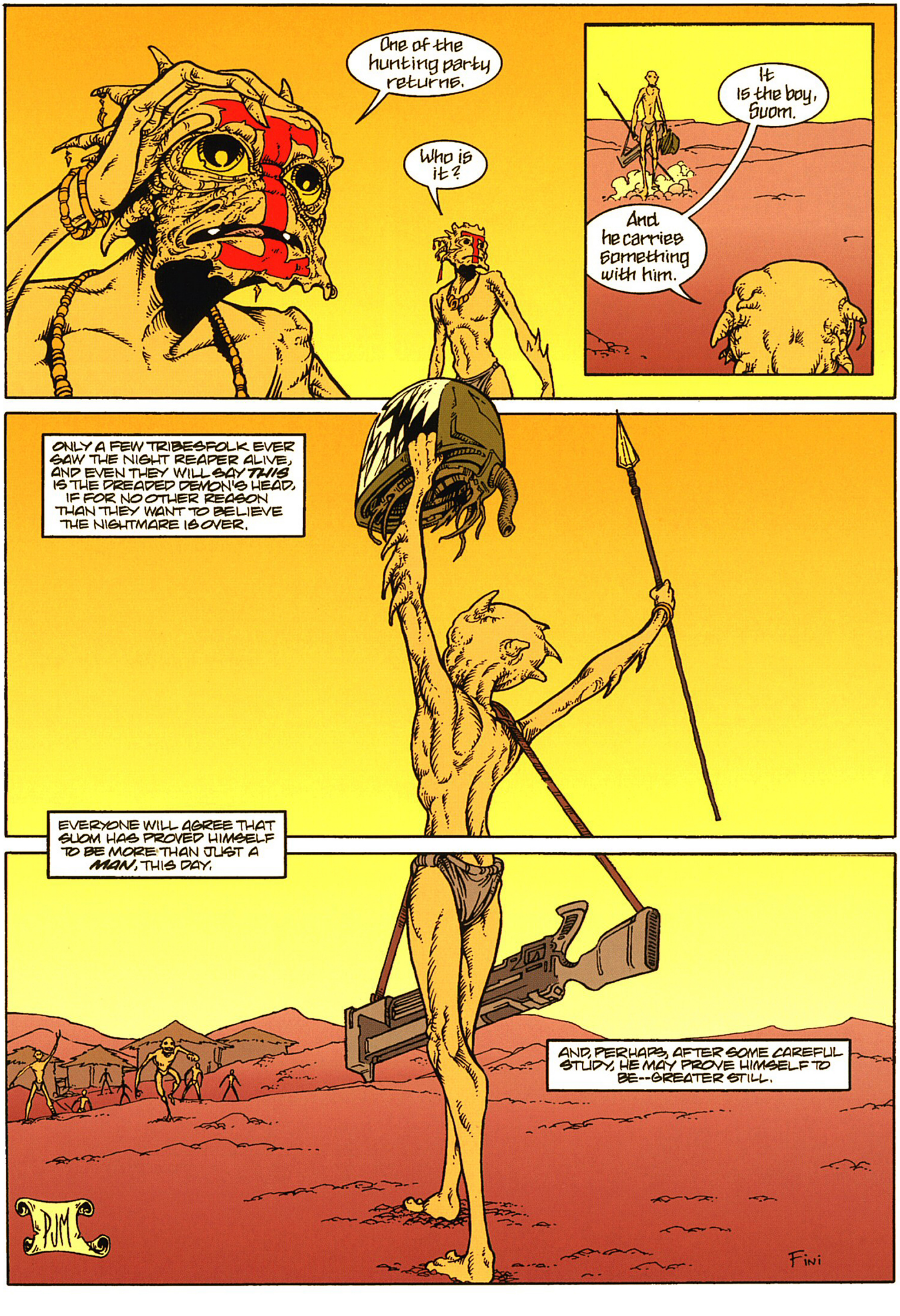

BY NIGHTFALL, SUOM'S FEAR IS TEMPERED BY THE DAY'S EVENTS.
Shius, this Faceless One seems to want to help us.
It hurt you earlier, but it has provided us with a warm Fire, and Food.
It is not very good food, but it Fills our stomachs.
And that is something, is it not, Shius?
SHIUS DOES NOT ANSWER.
BECAUSE HE *CANNOT* ANSWER, EVER AGAIN.
SHIUS WAS BADLY HURT, AND COULD HAVE DIED FROM HIS INJURIES.
BUT, MAYBE, THERE IS ANOTHER EXPLANATION.

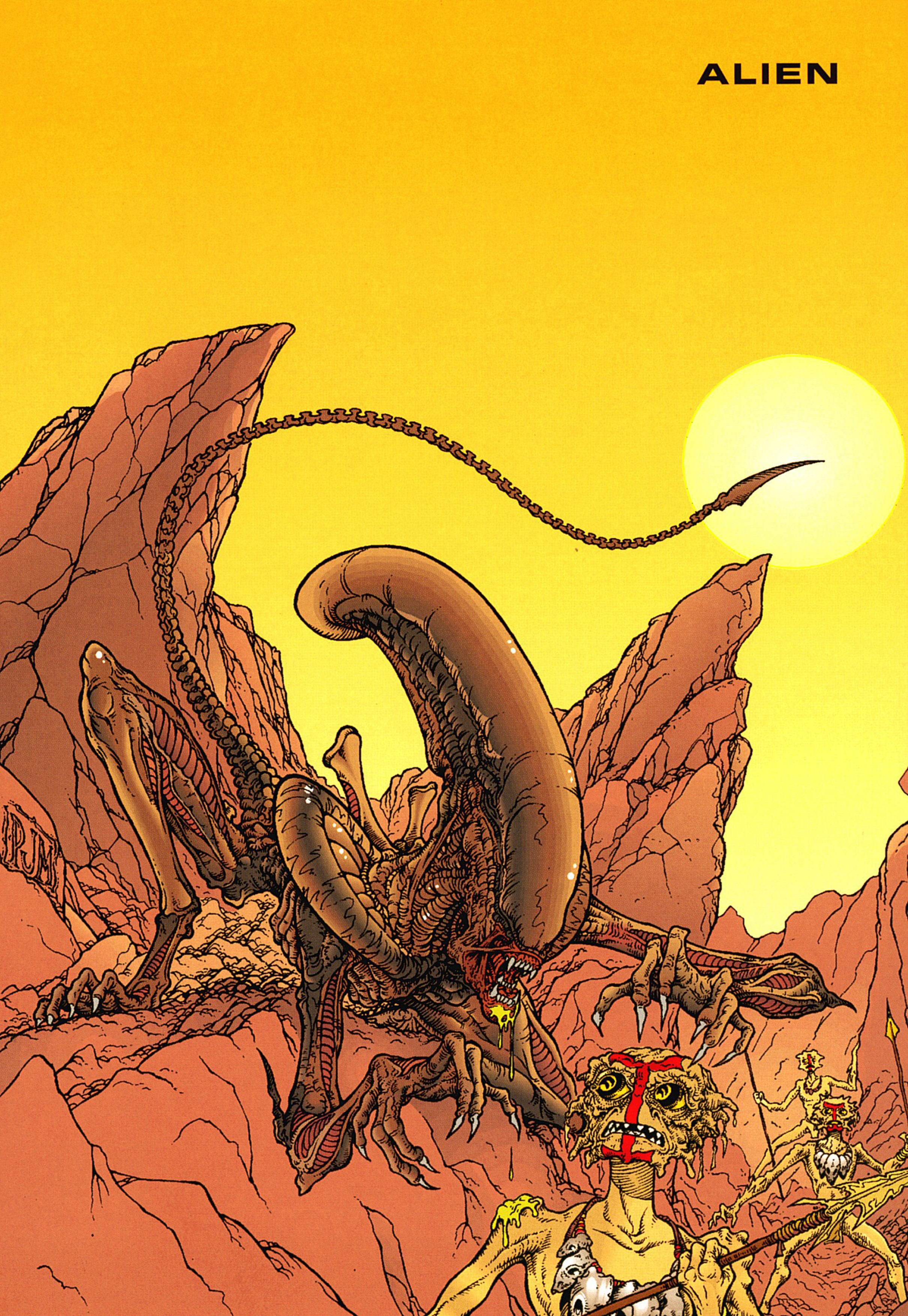
SUDDENLY, SUSPICION IS REPLACED WITH STARK TERROR.
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
THE BOY HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHY HE WAS HERE.
THE NIGHT REAPER. THE DEMON. SLAYER OF WOMEN, CHILDREN--AND HIS TRIBE'S GREATEST HUNTERS--
SHHHKOW!
--DESTROYED, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.


FOR A LONG TIME, ALL SLIOM CAN DO IS WATCH. SUCH A MIGHTY WEAPON, GREATER THAN A HUNDRED SPEARS.
BECAUSE OF IT, HE IS ALIVE, AND THE NIGHT REAPER IS DEAD.
DEAD, BUT NOT WITHOUT SOME POWER. A POWER SLIOM PLANS TO USE.
You have saved me, and my people. Many moons, the Night Reaper has preyed on our village.
Please, let me take home the monster's head, so that my tribe may know the Night Reaper is truly dead.
You must hear my words. I know YOU brought the creature down, but I have sacrificed so much--
NO!
I am sorry, Faceless One. I shall leave you be.
SLIOM CANNOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF IT.
AFTER SO MUCH PLANNING, PAIN, AND HORROR, SLIOM IS TO BE DENIED THIS PRIZE.

THEN IT DAWNS ON HIM.
THE FACELESS ONE WANTS THE NIGHT REAPER'S HEAD FOR ITS OWN PURPOSE.
IT WILL BE WELCOMED INTO THE VILLAGE AS A SAVIOR, AND WITH THAT WEAPON IT POSSESSES, COULDN'T IT BECOME CHIEFTAIN?
YES, THIS IS A POWERFUL BEING, BUT IT SEEKS TO ROB SUOM OF HIS OWN GOAL.
FOR A MOMENT, ALL THE FEAR IN SUOM'S HEART IS OVERCOME BY ANGER, JEALOUSY, AND AMBITION.
AND IN THAT MOMENT--
--SUOM BECOMES A MAN.


SLIOM WILL HAVE HIS TROPHY, AND THE PRESTIGE IT WILL BRING HIM.
SSSSSSSSSS
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES--
--SLIOM WILL HAVE HIS TROPHY.
MANY MILES ARE COVERED BY THE NEXT MORNING.


One of the hunting party returns.
Who is it?
It is the boy, Suom.
And he carries something with him.
ONLY A FEW TRIBESFOLK EVER SAW THE NIGHT REAPER ALIVE, AND EVEN THEY WILL SAY THIS IS THE DREADED DEMON'S HEAD, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THEY WANT TO BELIEVE THE NIGHTMARE IS OVER.
EVERYONE WILL AGREE THAT SUOM HAS PROVED HIMSELF TO BE MORE THAN JUST A MAN, THIS DAY.
AND, PERHAPS, AFTER SOME CAREFUL STUDY, HE MAY PROVE HIMSELF TO BE--GREATER STILL.
PJM
Fini


ALIEN

script
JOHN ARCUDI

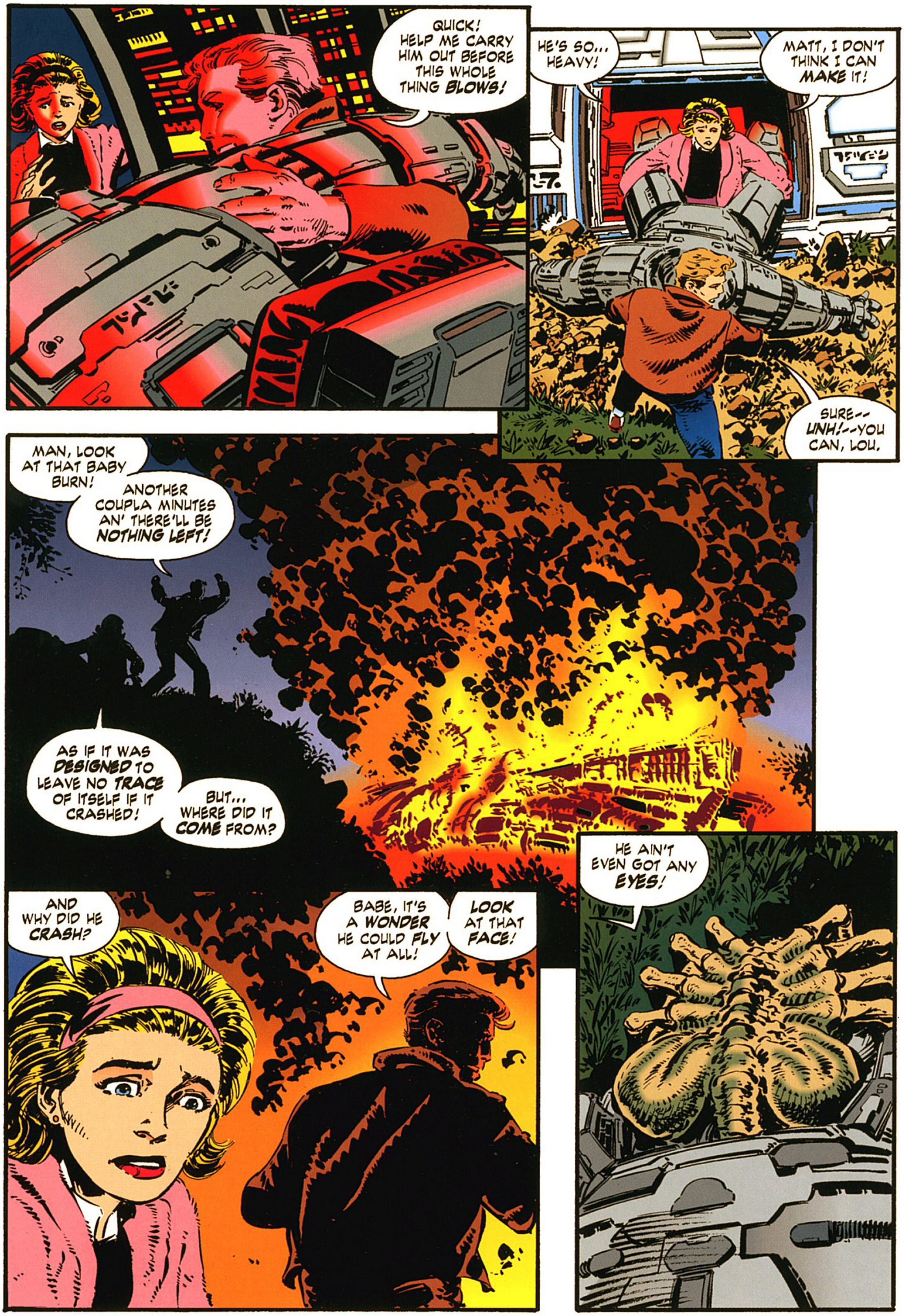
art
PAUL MENDOZA

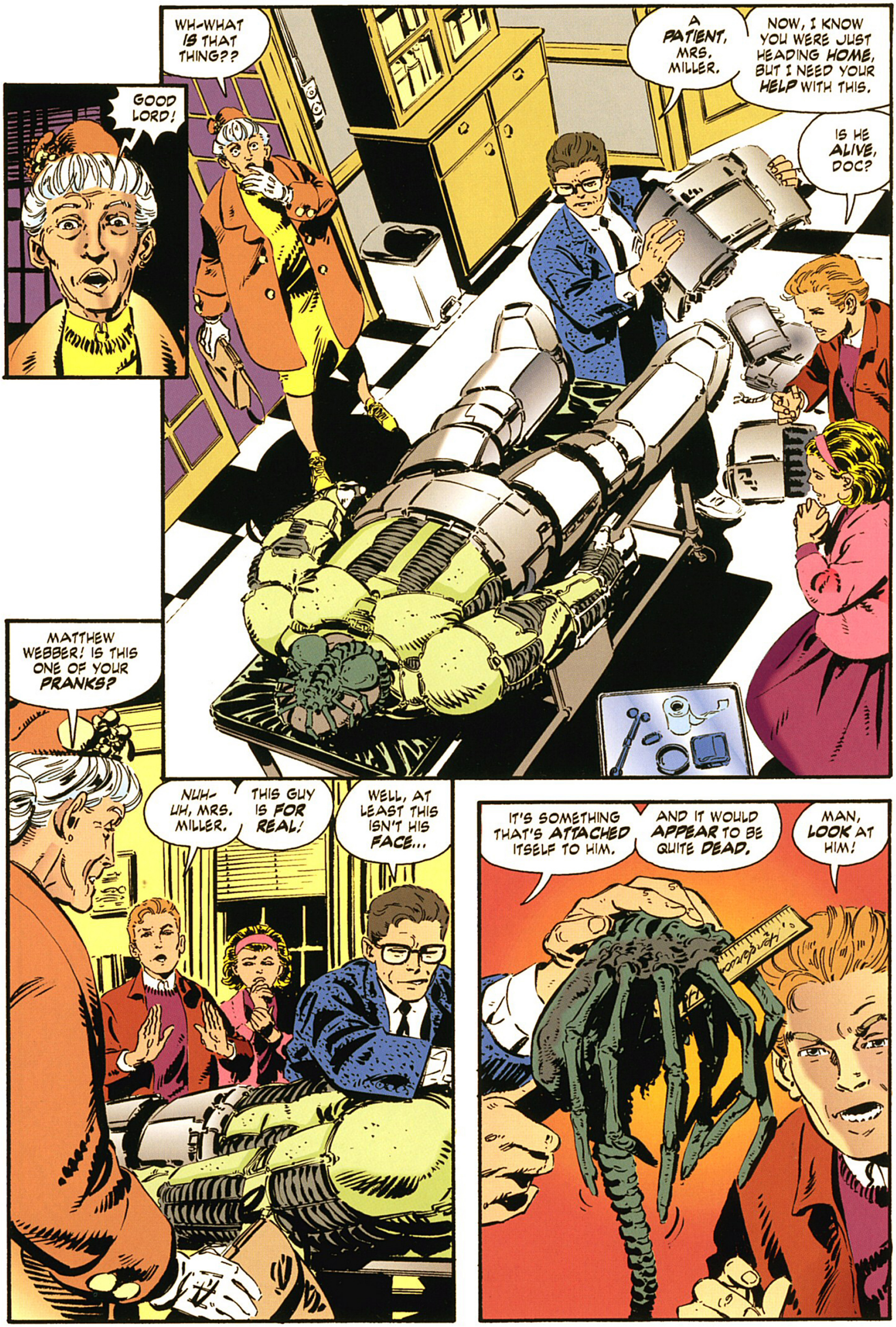
colors
JAMES SINCLAIR

lettering
VICKIE WILLIAMS

title illustration
PAUL MENDOZA

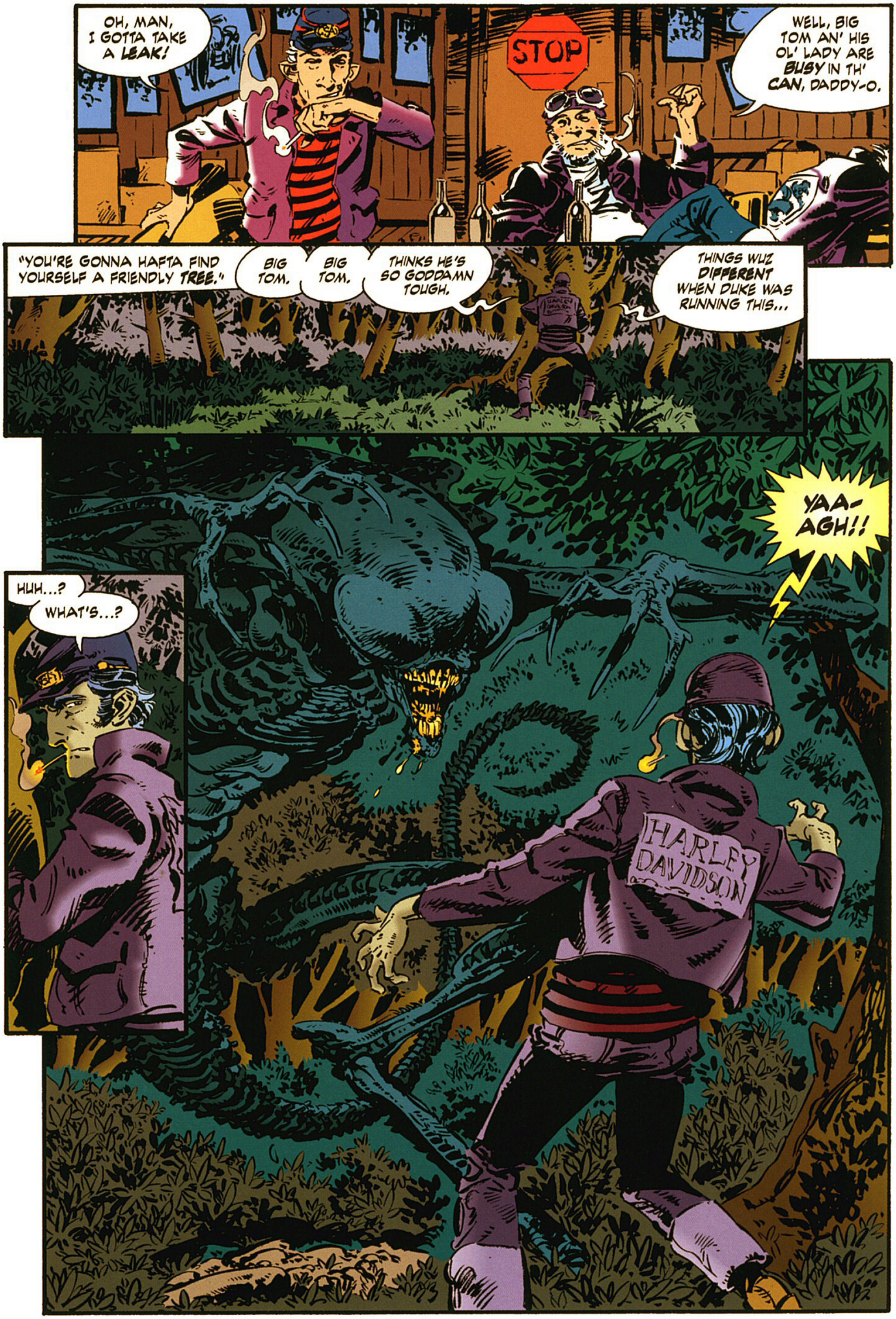
MATT! BE CAREFUL! I'M SCARED!
DON'T SWEAT IT, LOU ANN.
C'MON! IT HIT JUST OVER THIS...
...RIDGE...
MATT-- THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANY AIRPLANE I'VE EVER SEEN!
NO! IT'S MORE LIKE SOME KINDA FLYING SAUCER!
BUT IT'S ON FIRE!
C'MON, LOU! LET'S SEE IF THERE'S ANYBODY INSIDE!
SO WE BETTER BE QUICK!
THERE'S AN OPEN HATCH OVER HERE!
LOOK! THAT'S GOTTA BE THE PILOT!
MATT! HE'S--IT'S NOT EVEN HUMAN!!


QUICK! HELP ME CARRY HIM OUT BEFORE THIS WHOLE THING BLOWS!
HE'S SO... HEAVY!
MATT, I DON'T THINK I CAN MAKE IT!
SURE-- UNH!--YOU CAN, LOU.
MAN, LOOK AT THAT BABY BURN!
ANOTHER COUPLA MINUTES AN' THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT!
AS IF IT WAS DESIGNED TO LEAVE NO TRACE OF ITSELF IF IT CRASHED!
BUT... WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
AND WHY DID HE CRASH?
BABE, IT'S A WONDER HE COULD FLY AT ALL!
LOOK AT THAT FACE!
HE AIN'T EVEN GOT ANY EYES!

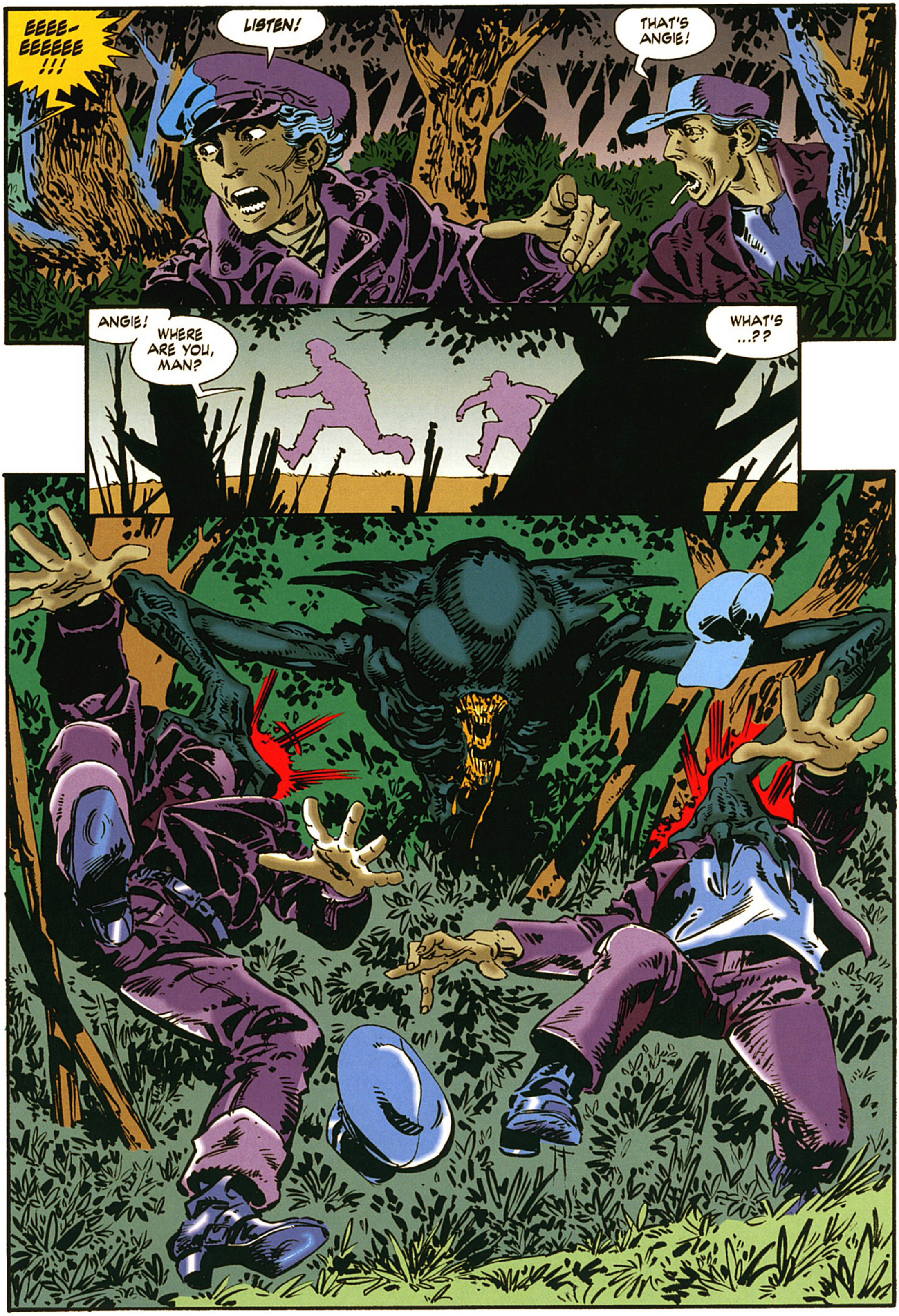

GOOD LORD!
WH-WHAT IS THAT THING??
A PATIENT, MRS. MILLER.
NOW, I KNOW YOU WERE JUST HEADING HOME, BUT I NEED YOUR HELP WITH THIS.
IS HE ALIVE, DOC?
MATTHEW WEBBER! IS THIS ONE OF YOUR PRANKS?
NUH-UH, MRS. MILLER.
THIS GUY IS FOR REAL!
WELL, AT LEAST THIS ISN'T HIS FACE...
IT'S SOMETHING THAT'S ATTACHED ITSELF TO HIM.
AND IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE QUITE DEAD.
MAN, LOOK AT HIM!

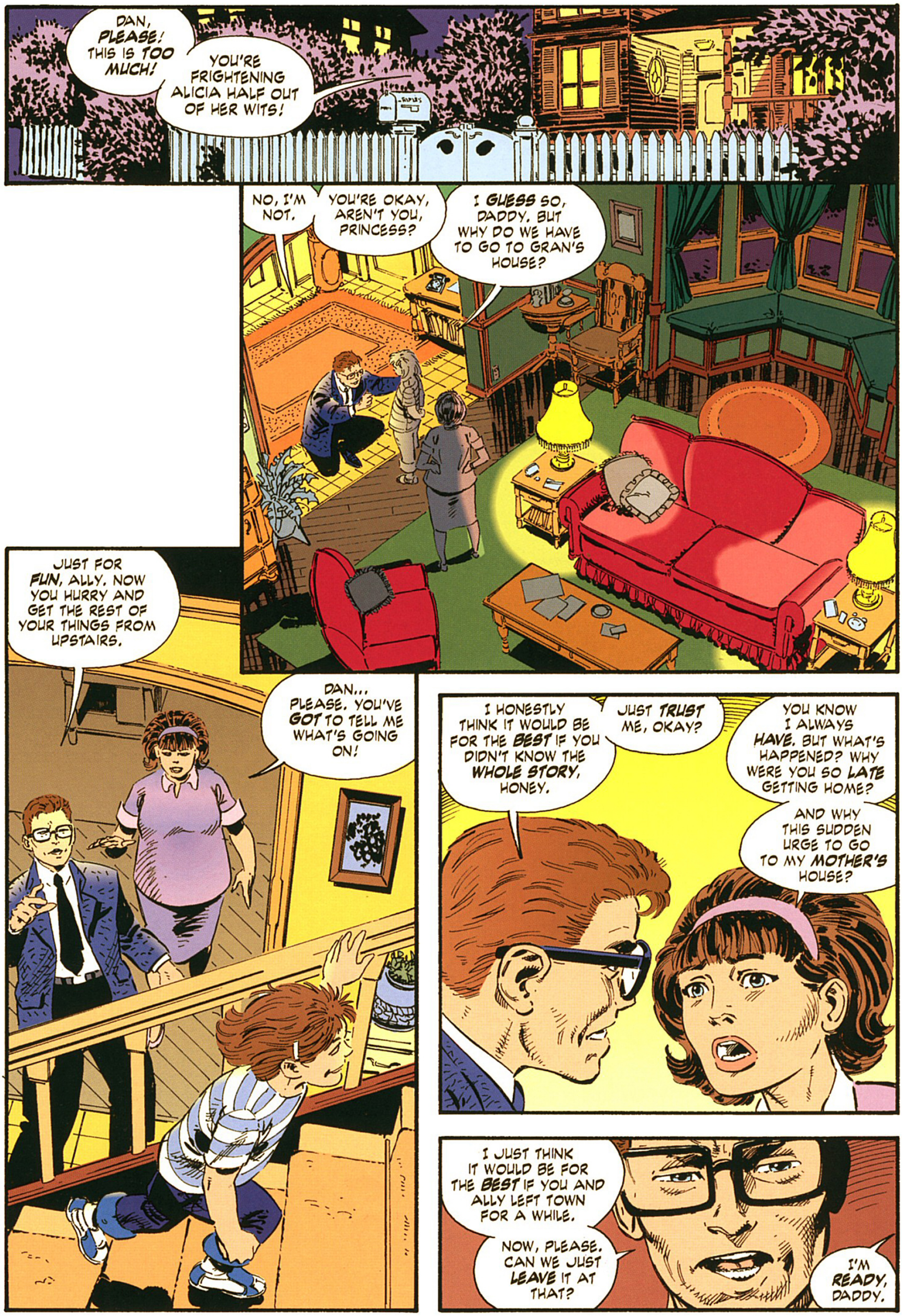
HIS REAL FACE AIN'T MUCH OF AN IMPROVE-MENT!!
THIS IS BEYOND ME. I THINK WE'D BETTER CALL WASHINGTON.
DOCTOR, LOOK! HE'S AWAKE!
HE'S IN A PANIC!
EASY! EASY! WE WANT TO HELP...

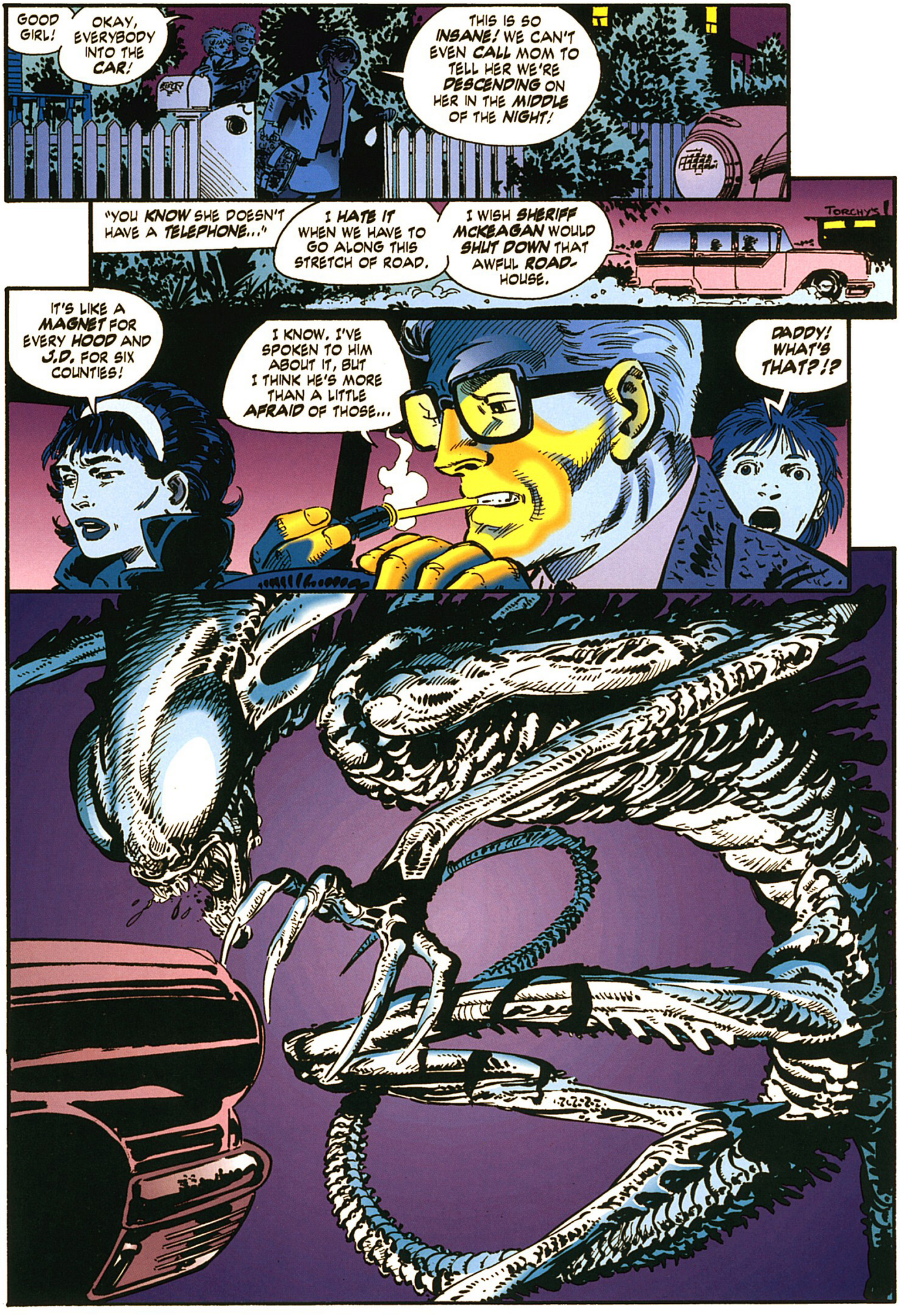
TORCHY'S
HEY! WHERE'S MY BEER??
HOLD YER GODDAMN HORSES.
I ONLY GOT ONE PAIR'A HANDS!
CHERRY! GET OFF YER FAT BEHIND AN' HELP ME!
HEY, NOT SO FAST, AUGIE!
CHERRY'S BUSY!

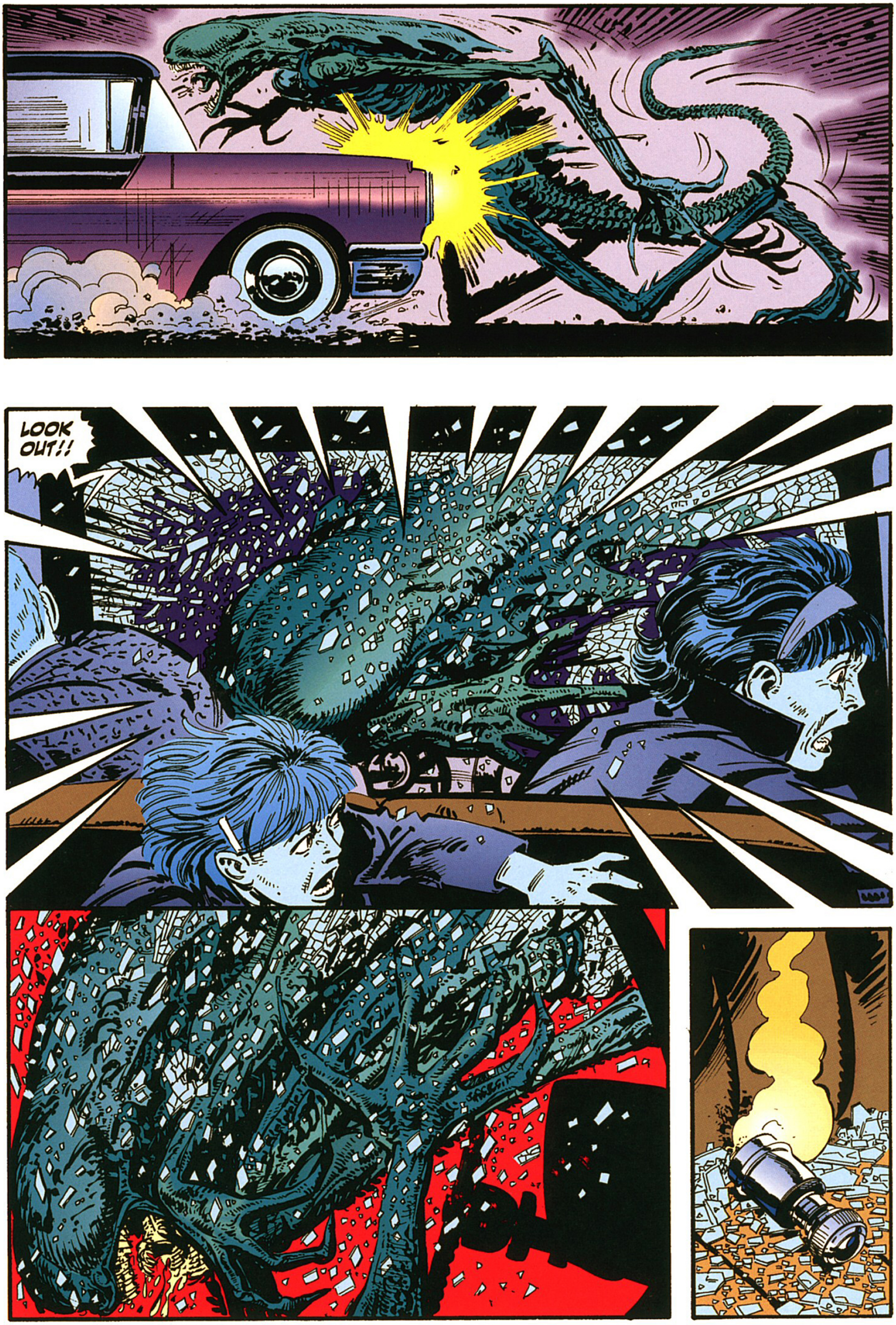

OH, MAN, I GOTTA TAKE A LEAK!
STOP
WELL, BIG TOM AN' HIS OL' LADY ARE BUSY IN TH' CAN, DADDY-O.
"YOU'RE GONNA HAFTA FIND YOURSELF A FRIENDLY TREE."
BIG TOM.
BIG TOM.
THINKS HE'S SO GODDAMN TOUGH.
THINGS WUZ DIFFERENT WHEN DUKE WAS RUNNING THIS...
HUH...?
WHAT'S...?
YAA-AGH!!
HARLEY DAVIDSON

HE'S GOTTA BE OUT HERE SOMEWHERES.
HIS BIKE'S STILL BACK AT THE SHACK.
MICKEY!
HEY, MICKEY! WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU, MAN?
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO TAKE A...
...PISS...

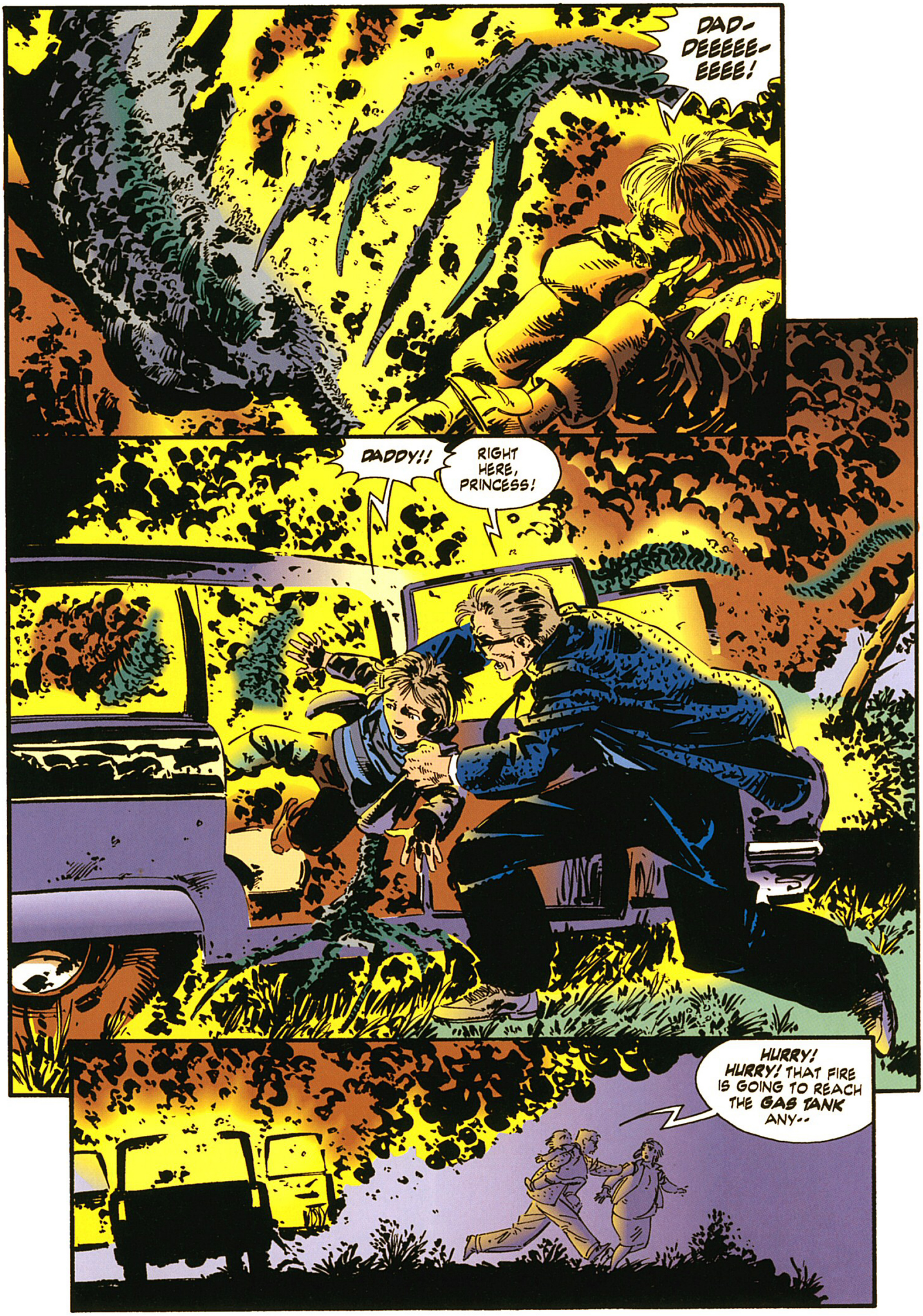

EEEE-EEEEEE!!!
LISTEN!
THAT'S ANGIE!
ANGIE!
WHERE ARE YOU, MAN?
WHAT'S ...??


DAN, PLEASE! THIS IS TOO MUCH!
YOU'RE FRIGHTENING ALICIA HALF OUT OF HER WITS!
NO, I'M NOT.
YOU'RE OKAY, AREN'T YOU, PRINCESS?
I GUESS SO, DADDY. BUT WHY DO WE HAVE TO GO TO GRAN'S HOUSE?
JUST FOR FUN, ALLY. NOW YOU HURRY AND GET THE REST OF YOUR THINGS FROM UPSTAIRS.
DAN... PLEASE. YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
I HONESTLY THINK IT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, HONEY.
JUST TRUST ME, OKAY?
YOU KNOW I ALWAYS HAVE. BUT WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHY WERE YOU SO LATE GETTING HOME?
AND WHY THIS SUDDEN URGE TO GO TO MY MOTHER'S HOUSE?
I JUST THINK IT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST IF YOU AND ALLY LEFT TOWN FOR A WHILE.
NOW, PLEASE. CAN WE JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT?
I'M READY, DADDY.

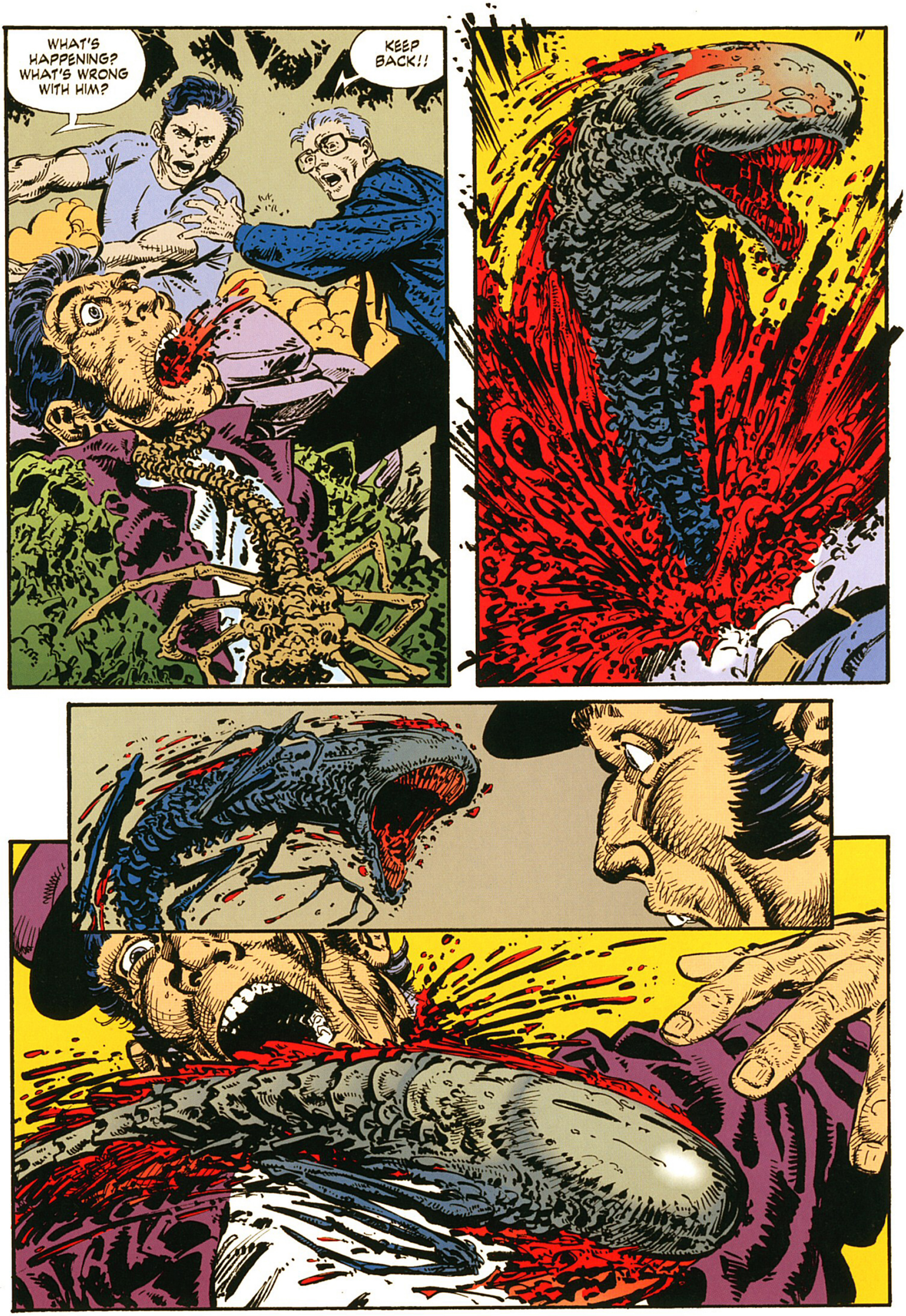

GOOD GIRL!
OKAY, EVERYBODY INTO THE CAR!
THIS IS SO INSANE! WE CAN'T EVEN CALL MOM TO TELL HER WE'RE DESCENDING ON HER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!
"YOU KNOW SHE DOESN'T HAVE A TELEPHONE..."
I HATE IT WHEN WE HAVE TO GO ALONG THIS STRETCH OF ROAD.
I WISH SHERIFF McKEAGAN WOULD SHUT DOWN THAT AWFUL ROAD-HOUSE.
TORCHY'S
IT'S LIKE A MAGNET FOR EVERY HOOD AND J.D. FOR SIX COUNTIES!
I KNOW. I'VE SPOKEN TO HIM ABOUT IT, BUT I THINK HE'S MORE THAN A LITTLE AFRAID OF THOSE...
DADDY! WHAT'S THAT?!?

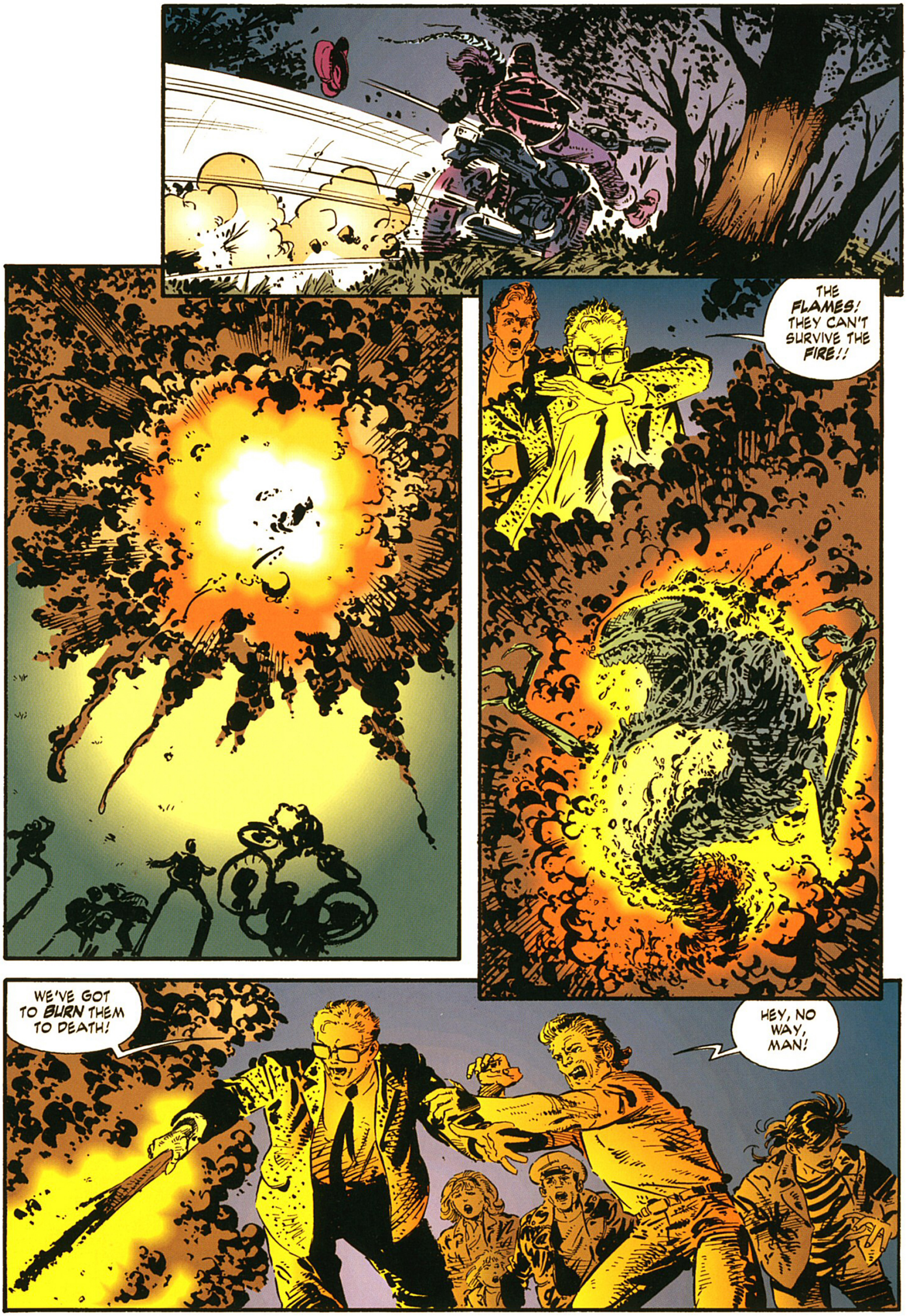

LOOK OUT!!

SKREEEEEEE!!
EEEE-
EEEEE!!


DAD-DEEEEE-EEEE!
DADDY!!
RIGHT HERE, PRINCESS!
HURRY! HURRY! THAT FIRE IS GOING TO REACH THE GAS TANK ANY--

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? ARE YOU BOTH...
...OKAY...?

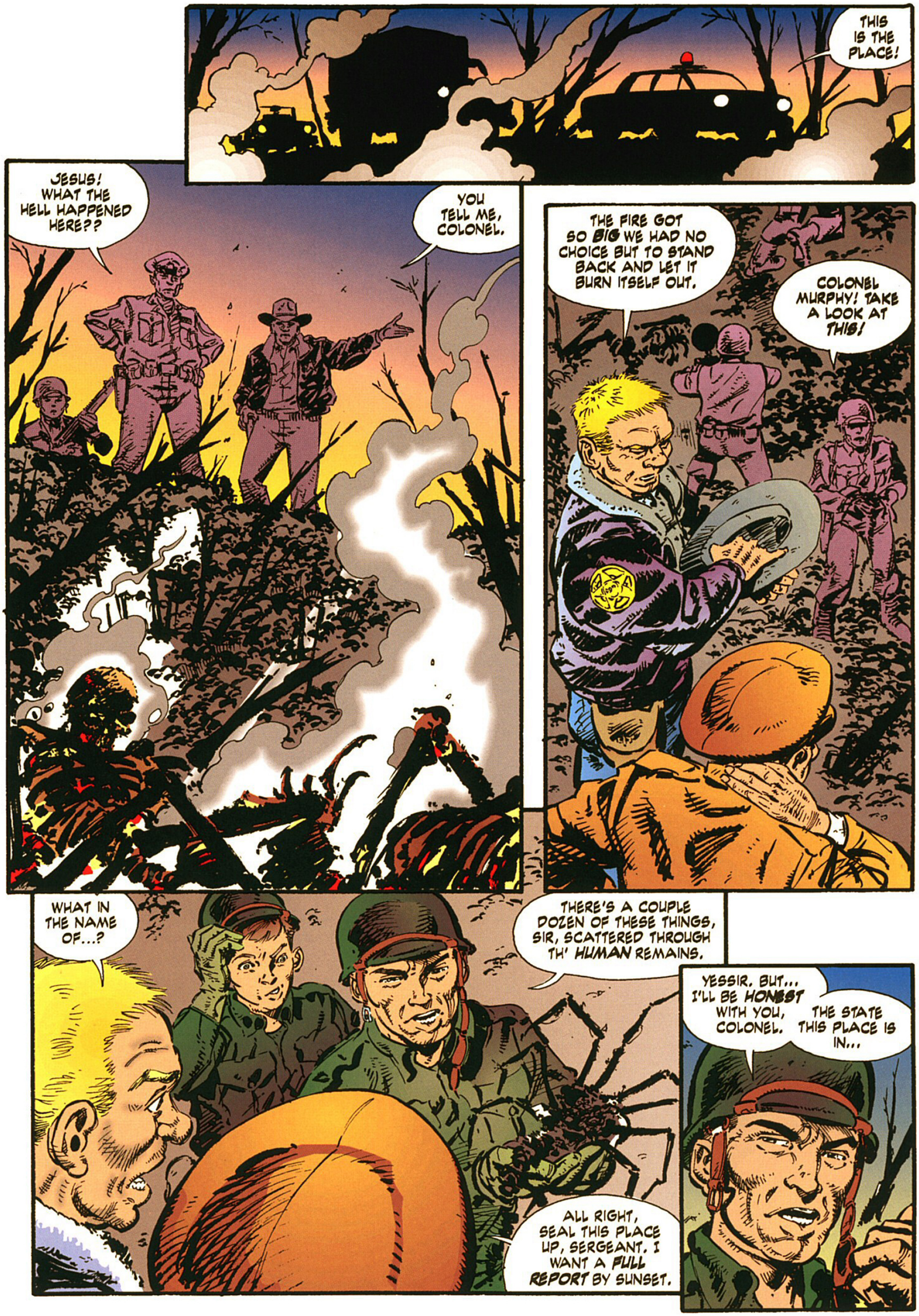

WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
KEEP BACK!!

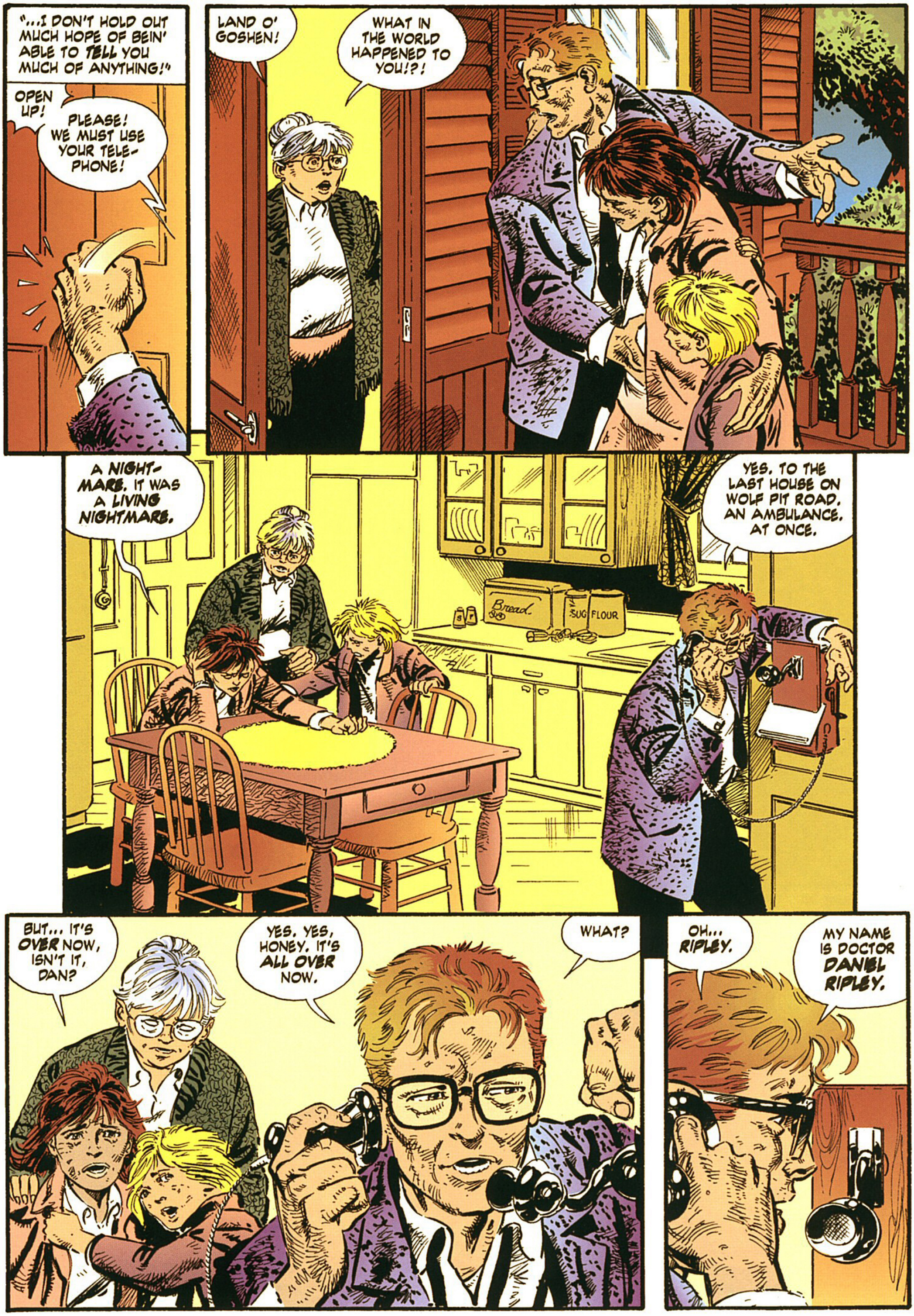

THE FLAMES! THEY CAN'T SURVIVE THE FIRE!!
WE'VE GOT TO BURN THEM TO DEATH!
HEY, NO WAY, MAN!

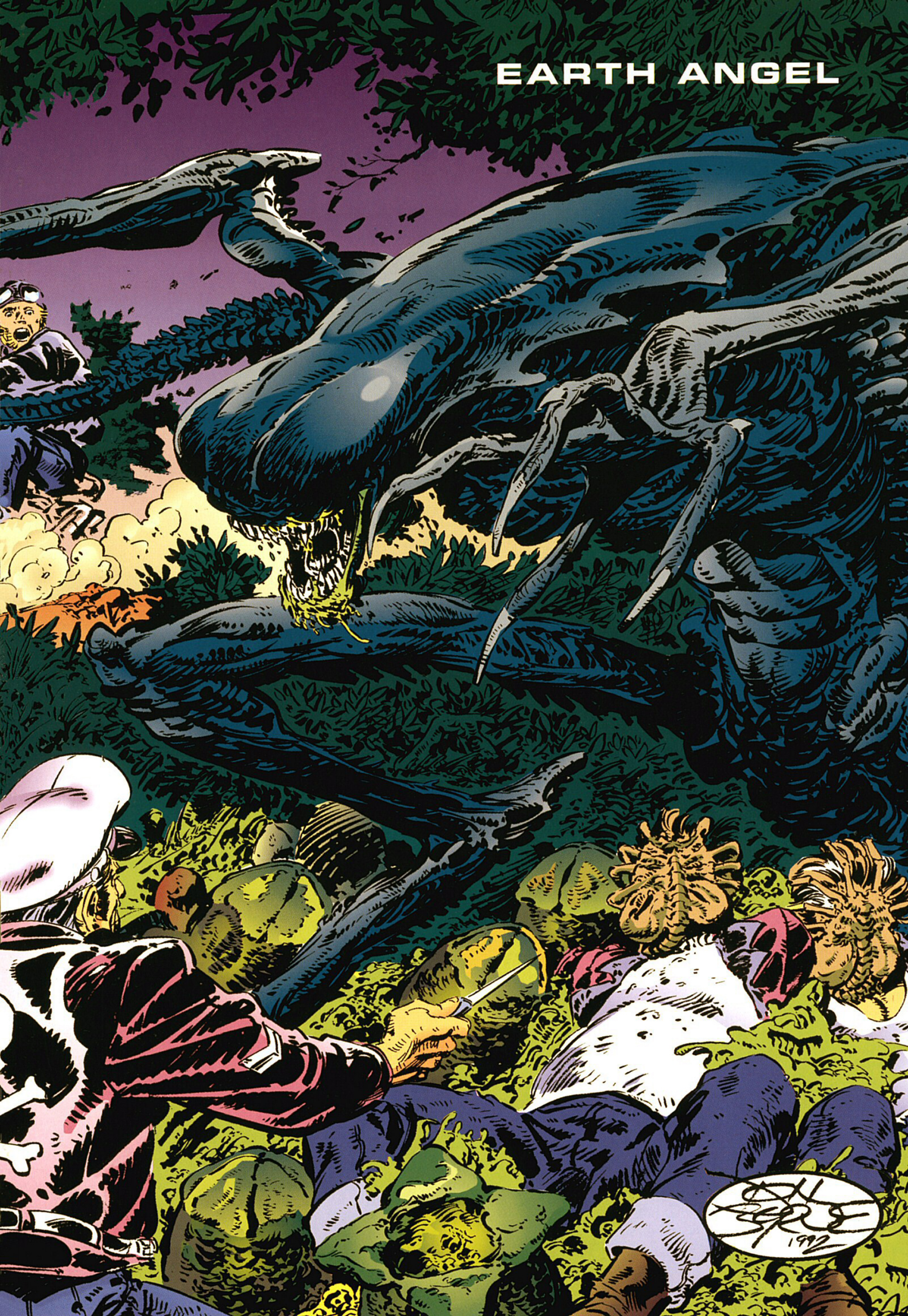
THOSE ARE OUR BUDDIES, MAN. YOU AIN'T GONNA TORCH 'EM!
GET OUT OF MY WAY! I'VE SEEN THESE THINGS BE-FORE! THEY'VE GOT TO BE DESTROYED!
I SAID NO WAY, MAN!
STEVE! PULL THOSE THINGS OFF THEM!
YOU GOT IT!
MY LIGHTER!
IT'S SET FIRE TO MY CIGARETTE LIGHTER!!

GAS

RIDE 'EM DOWN!!
SKRAG 'EM!!


THIS IS THE PLACE!
JESUS! WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE??
YOU TELL ME, COLONEL.
THE FIRE GOT SO BIG WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO STAND BACK AND LET IT BURN ITSELF OUT.
COLONEL MURPHY! TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...?
THERE'S A COUPLE DOZEN OF THESE THINGS, SIR, SCATTERED THROUGH TH' HUMAN REMAINS.
ALL RIGHT, SEAL THIS PLACE UP, SERGEANT. I WANT A FULL REPORT BY SUNSET.
YESSIR. BUT... I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU, COLONEL.
THE STATE THIS PLACE IS IN...


"...I DON'T HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE OF BEIN' ABLE TO TELL YOU MUCH OF ANYTHING!"
OPEN UP!
PLEASE! WE MUST USE YOUR TELE-PHONE!
LAND O' GOSHEN!
WHAT IN THE WORLD HAPPENED TO YOU!?!
A NIGHT-MARE. IT WAS A LIVING NIGHTMARE.
YES. TO THE LAST HOUSE ON WOLF PIT ROAD. AN AMBULANCE. AT ONCE.
Bread
SUG
FLOUR
BUT... IT'S OVER NOW, ISN'T IT, DAN?
YES. YES, HONEY. IT'S ALL OVER NOW.
WHAT?
OH... RIPLEY.
MY NAME IS DOCTOR DANIEL RIPLEY.


EARTH ANGEL

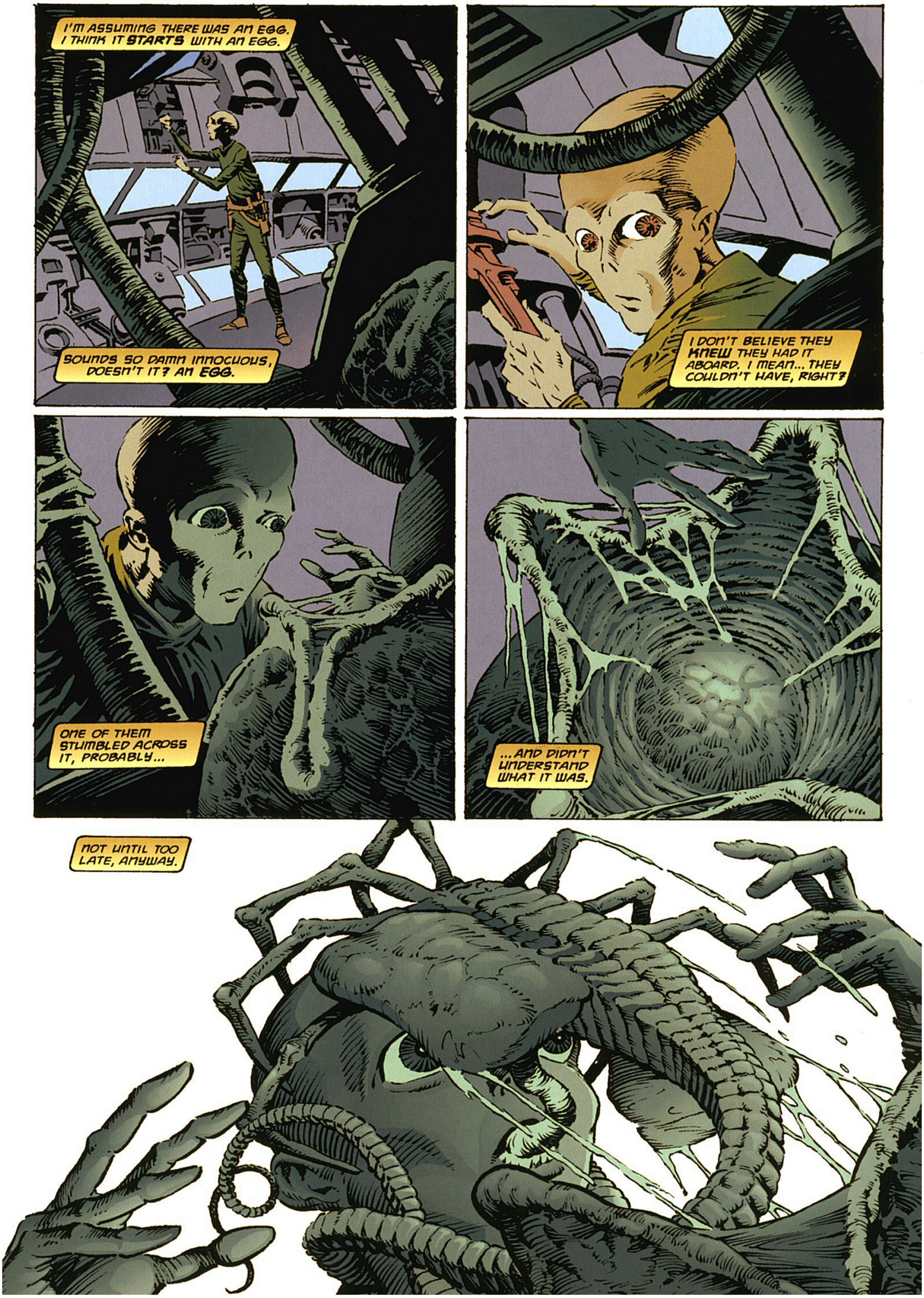
script
JOHN BYRNE

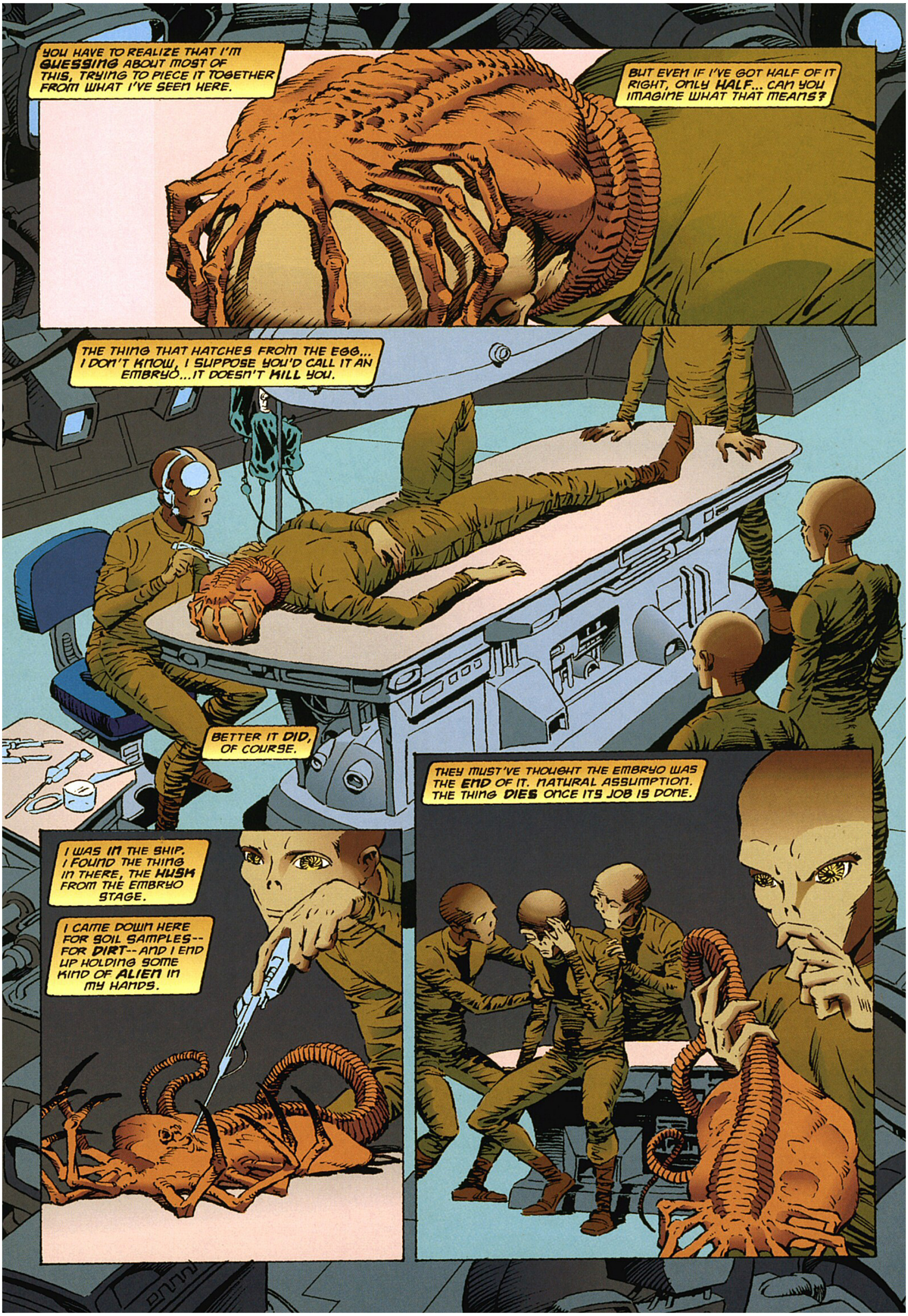
art
JOHN BYRNE

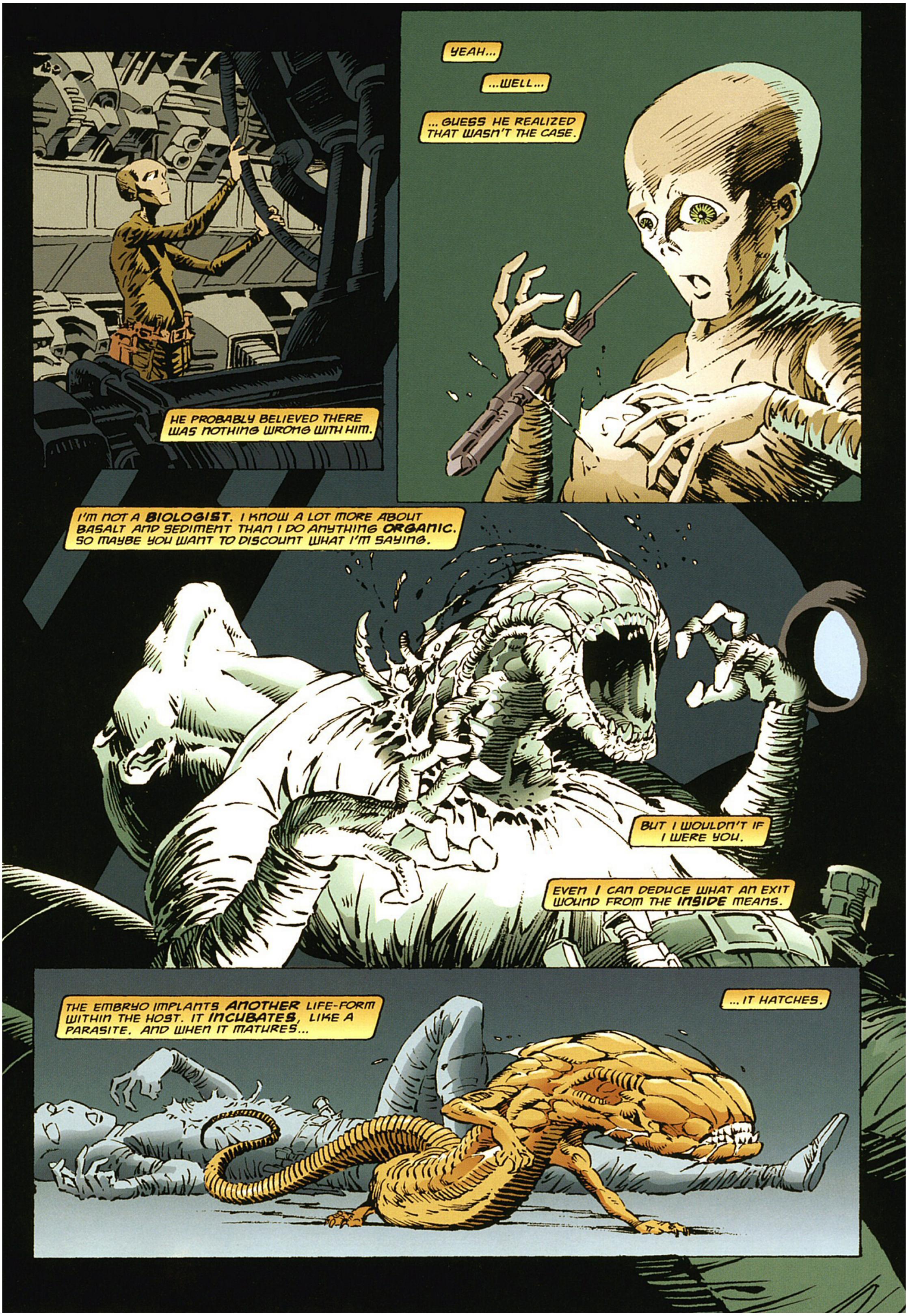
colors
MATT WEBB

title illustration
JOHN BYRNE with **MATT WEBB**

... HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHERE THEY CAME FROM. NORMALLY THAT'D BE SUCH AN IMPORTANT QUESTION, BUT NOW...
...WELL, OBVIOUSLY IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW. NOT MUCH DOES, REALLY.
FUNNY. I'VE ALWAYS LOOKED TO THE EARTH. THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I NEVER BOTHERED TO TURN MY EYES TO THE SKY AND WONDER. DIDN'T MUCH CARE IF THERE WAS ANYONE OUT THERE OR NOT.
SO THIS HAPPENS TO ME. GOD HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR AFTER ALL.
I KNOW AT LEAST WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE. NOT ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM US, TRUTH-FULLY.
I CAN'T EVEN GUESS AT ANYTHING MORE THAN THAT. WHAT WERE THEY LIKE? PACIFISTS OR WARRIORS? EXPLORERS? I CAN'T TELL YOU.


I'M ASSUMING THERE WAS AN EGG. I THINK IT STARTS WITH AN EGG.
SOUNDS SO DAMN INNOCUOUS, DOESN'T IT? AN EGG.
I DON'T BELIEVE THEY KNEW THEY HAD IT ABOARD. I MEAN... THEY COULDN'T HAVE, RIGHT?
ONE OF THEM STUMBLED ACROSS IT, PROBABLY...
...AND DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS.
NOT UNTIL TOO LATE, ANYWAY.

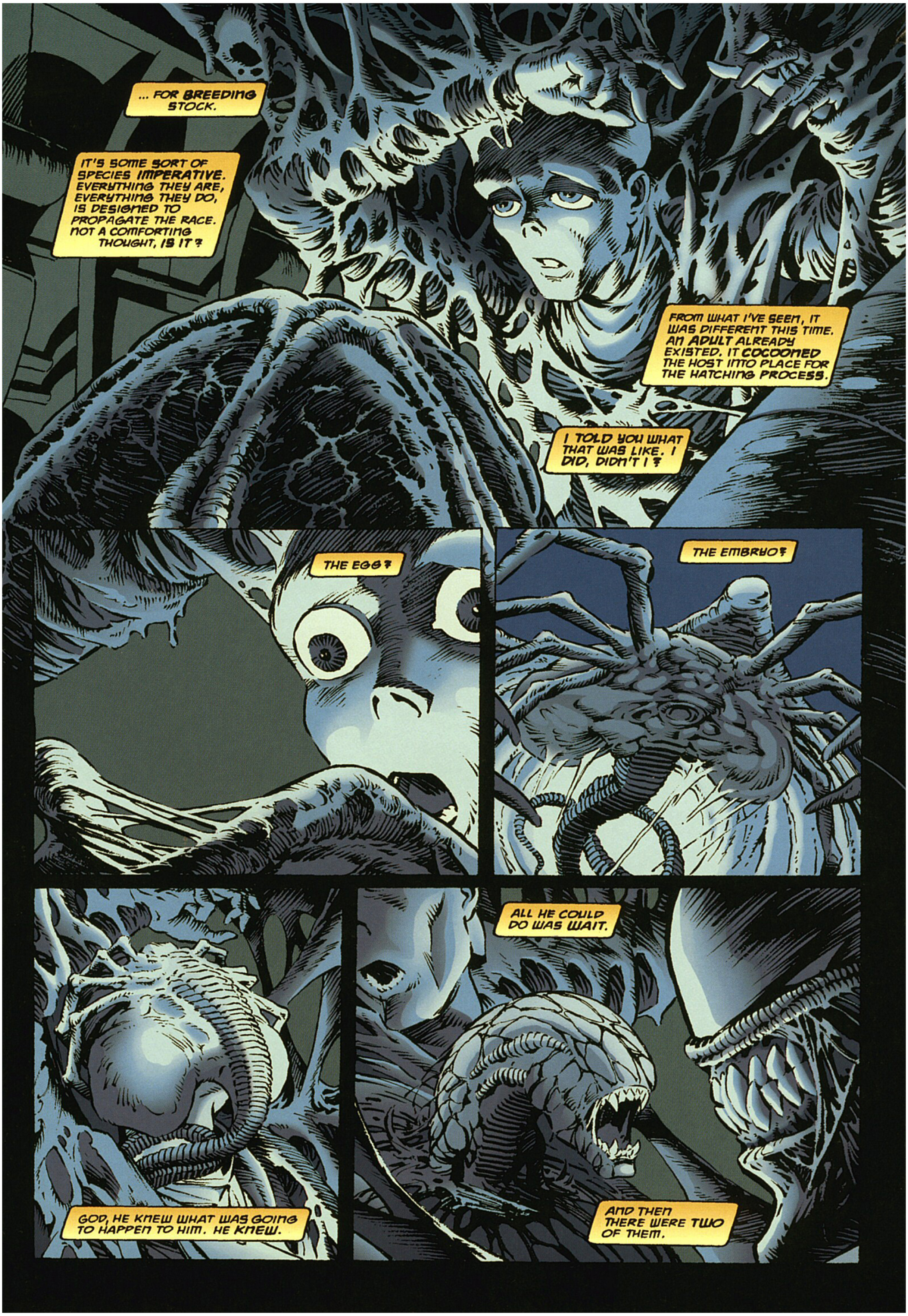

YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT I'M GUESSING ABOUT MOST OF THIS, TRYING TO PIECE IT TOGETHER FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN HERE.
BUT EVEN IF I'VE GOT HALF OF IT RIGHT, ONLY HALF... CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THAT MEANS?
THE THING THAT HATCHES FROM THE EGG... I DON'T KNOW, I SUPPOSE YOU'D CALL IT AN EMBRYO... IT DOESN'T KILL YOU.
BETTER IT DID, OF COURSE.
I WAS IN THE SHIP. I FOUND THE THING IN THERE, THE HUSK FROM THE EMBRYO STAGE.
I CAME DOWN HERE FOR SOIL SAMPLES-- FOR DIRT-- AND I END UP HOLDING SOME KIND OF ALIEN IN MY HANDS.
THEY MUST'VE THOUGHT THE EMBRYO WAS THE END OF IT. NATURAL ASSUMPTION. THE THING DIES ONCE ITS JOB IS DONE.

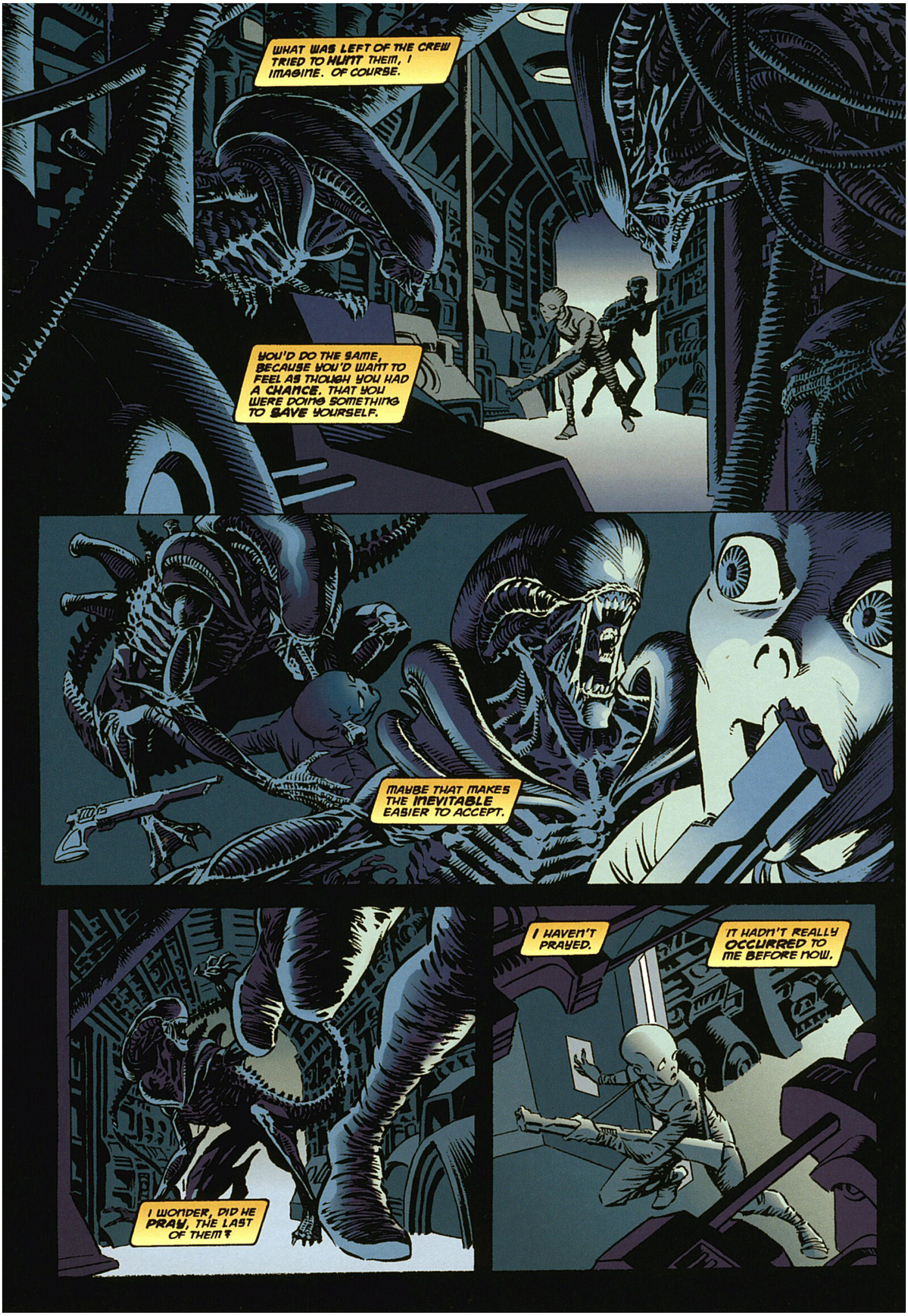

HE PROBABLY BELIEVED THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM.
YEAH...
...WELL...
...GUESS HE REALIZED THAT WASN'T THE CASE.
I'M NOT A BIOLOGIST. I KNOW A LOT MORE ABOUT BASALT AND SEDIMENT THAN I DO ANYTHING ORGANIC. SO MAYBE YOU WANT TO DISCOUNT WHAT I'M SAYING.
BUT I WOULDN'T IF I WERE YOU.
EVEN I CAN DEDUCE WHAT AN EXIT WOUND FROM THE INSIDE MEANS.
THE EMBRYO IMPLANTS ANOTHER LIFE-FORM WITHIN THE HOST. IT INCUBATES, LIKE A PARASITE. AND WHEN IT MATURES...
...IT HATCHES.

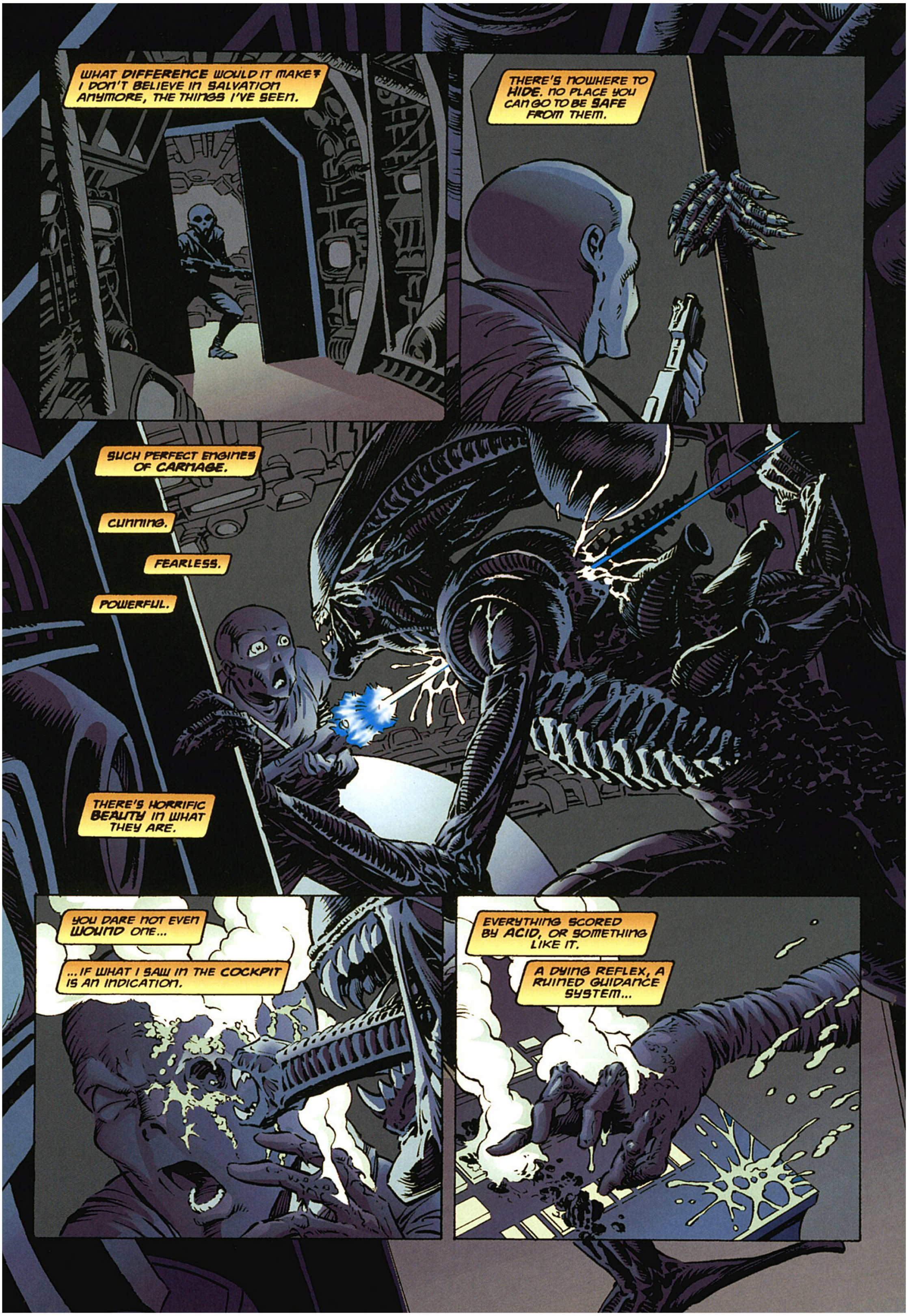
I FEEL SORRY FOR THEM, YOU KNOW?
WHAT MUST THEY HAVE THOUGHT, FINDING HIM WITH AN EIGHT-INCH HOLE BLOWN OUT OF HIS CHEST?
THEY SUSPECTED... SOME-THING. BUT ANYTHING EVEN CLOSE TO WHAT WAS ON THAT SHIP WITH THEM?
NOT IN THEIR DARKEST NIGHTMARES.
IT OCCURS TO ME THAT THEY PROBABLY WENT LOOKING FOR IT. SEEMS LIKE SUCH A PATHETIC THING TO DO.
I'M SURE IT FOUND THEM.
I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT IT'S LIKE, CATCHING SIGHT OF ONE FOR THE FIRST TIME.
THOUGH I SUPPOSE IF YOU'RE LISTENING TO THIS...

...YOU ALREADY KNOW WORDS CAN'T DESCRIBE.
DAMN IT! I WANT TO SEE MY WIFE AGAIN...

I THINK...
...I THINK I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
IT'S HARD TO... CONCENTRATE... BUT YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS. AS MUCH AS I CAN TELL.
SO WHAT WAS I...? YES. SEEING ONE.
AND SEEING WHAT IT DOES, MAYBE THEN THEY BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND.
I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN IT DIDN'T KILL THEM. NOT ALL OF THEM. NOT RIGHT AWAY.
IT TOOK AT LEAST ONE...

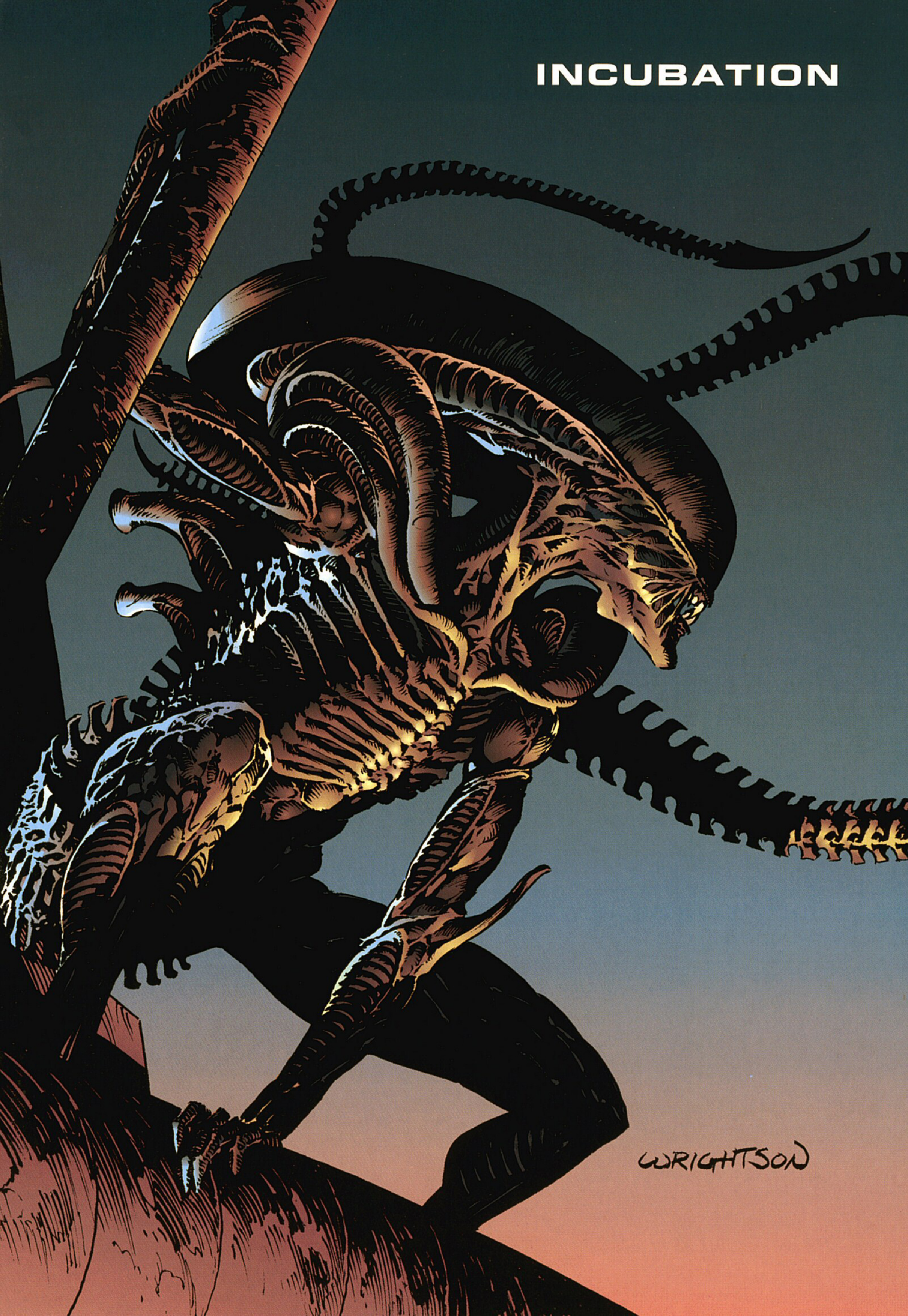

... FOR BREEDING STOCK.
IT'S SOME SORT OF SPECIES IMPERATIVE. EVERYTHING THEY ARE, EVERYTHING THEY DO, IS DESIGNED TO PROPAGATE THE RACE. NOT A COMFORTING THOUGHT, IS IT?
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, IT WAS DIFFERENT THIS TIME. AN ADULT ALREADY EXISTED. IT COCOONED THE HOST INTO PLACE FOR THE HATCHING PROCESS.
I TOLD YOU WHAT THAT WAS LIKE. I DID, DIDN'T I?
THE EGG?
THE EMBRYO?
GOD, HE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HIM. HE KNEW.
ALL HE COULD DO WAS WAIT.
AND THEN THERE WERE TWO OF THEM.


WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE CREW TRIED TO HUNT THEM, I IMAGINE. OF COURSE.
YOU'D DO THE SAME, BECAUSE YOU'D WANT TO FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD A CHANCE. THAT YOU WERE DOING SOMETHING TO SAVE YOURSELF.
MAYBE THAT MAKES THE INEVITABLE EASIER TO ACCEPT.
I WONDER, DID HE PRAY, THE LAST OF THEM?
I HAVEN'T PRAYED.
IT HADN'T REALLY OCCURRED TO ME BEFORE NOW.


WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE? I DON'T BELIEVE IN SALVATION ANYMORE, THE THINGS I'VE SEEN.
THERE'S NOWHERE TO HIDE. NO PLACE YOU CAN GO TO BE SAFE FROM THEM.
SUCH PERFECT ENGINES OF CARNAGE.
CUNNING.
FEARLESS.
POWERFUL.
THERE'S HORRIFIC BEAUTY IN WHAT THEY ARE.
YOU DARE NOT EVEN WOUND ONE...
...IF WHAT I SAW IN THE COCKPIT IS AN INDICATION.
EVERYTHING SCORED BY ACID, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT.
A DYING REFLEX, A RUINED GUIDANCE SYSTEM...

...DOESN'T MATTER HOW THE SHIP FOUND ITS WAY HERE. I DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS INTENTIONAL.
JUST AN ACCIDENT.
THAT'S PROBABLY HOW THEY SPREAD. ACCIDENTS, COINCIDENCE. FROM WORLD TO WORLD.
LIKE SEEDS SCATTERED BY THE WIND.
AND NOW THEY'RE HERE.
WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL, I SUPPOSE. WHAT IF IT'D COME DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF NEW YORK? OR LONDON?
WHAT KIND OF MASSACRE WOULD THAT BE?
YOU, LISTENING TO ME, THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. THAT'S WHY I'M LEAVING THIS.
THEY CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO SPREAD. YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE...

...THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS.
I DID WHAT I COULD, BUT NOT ENOUGH. IT'S GOING TO BE OVER VERY SOON FOR ME. DOWN TO MY LAST FLARE. SURVEY CHARGES ARE LONG GONE...
...NOT THAT THEY DID MUCH GOOD.
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER. FIND SOME WAY OF STOPPING THEM. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS. ONLY STOPPING THEM.
AND IF YOU'RE FORTUNATE TO SURVIVE THIS MADNESS AND GET HOME AGAIN, I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME. YOU OWE ME THAT, AT LEAST.
PLEASE...
...FIND MY WIFE. TELL HER I LOVE HER, AND MY LITTLE GIRL, TELL HER--
HHSSSSSSS
--hggk
KLIK

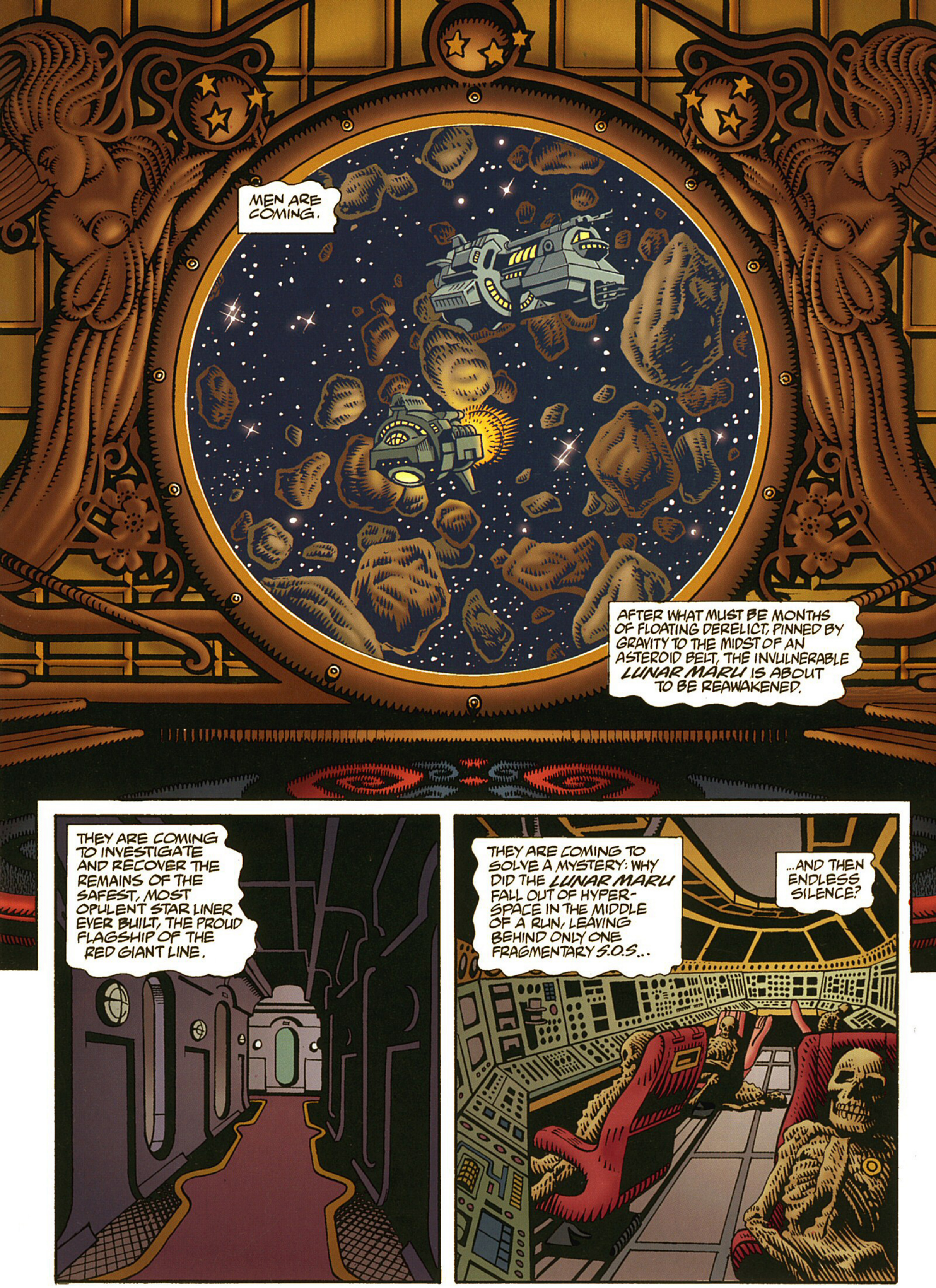

INCUBATION
WRIGHTSON

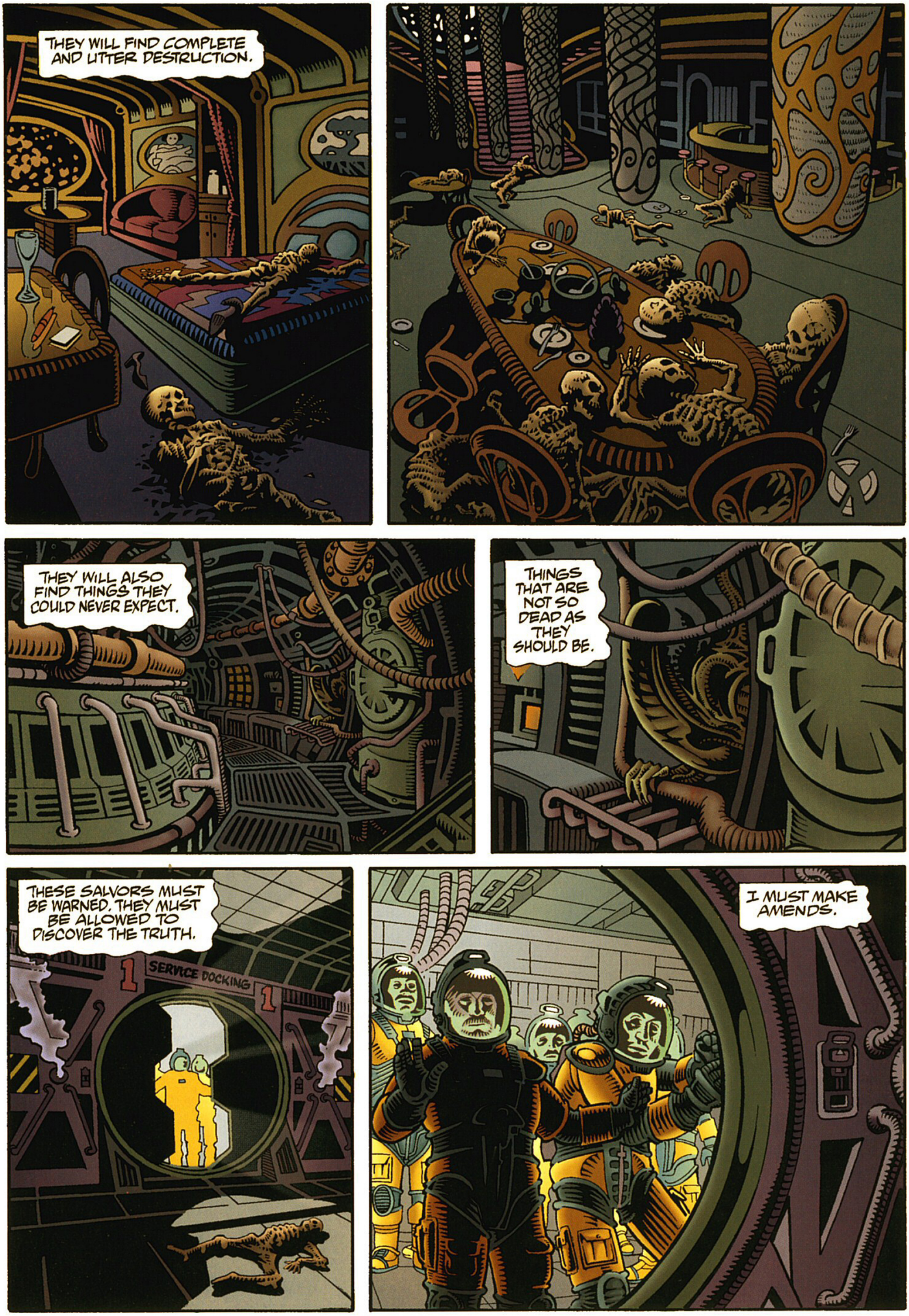
script
RON MARZ

art
BERNIE WRIGHTSON

lettering
SEAN KONOT

title illustration
BERNIE WRIGHTSON with **MATTHEW HOLLINGSWORTH**

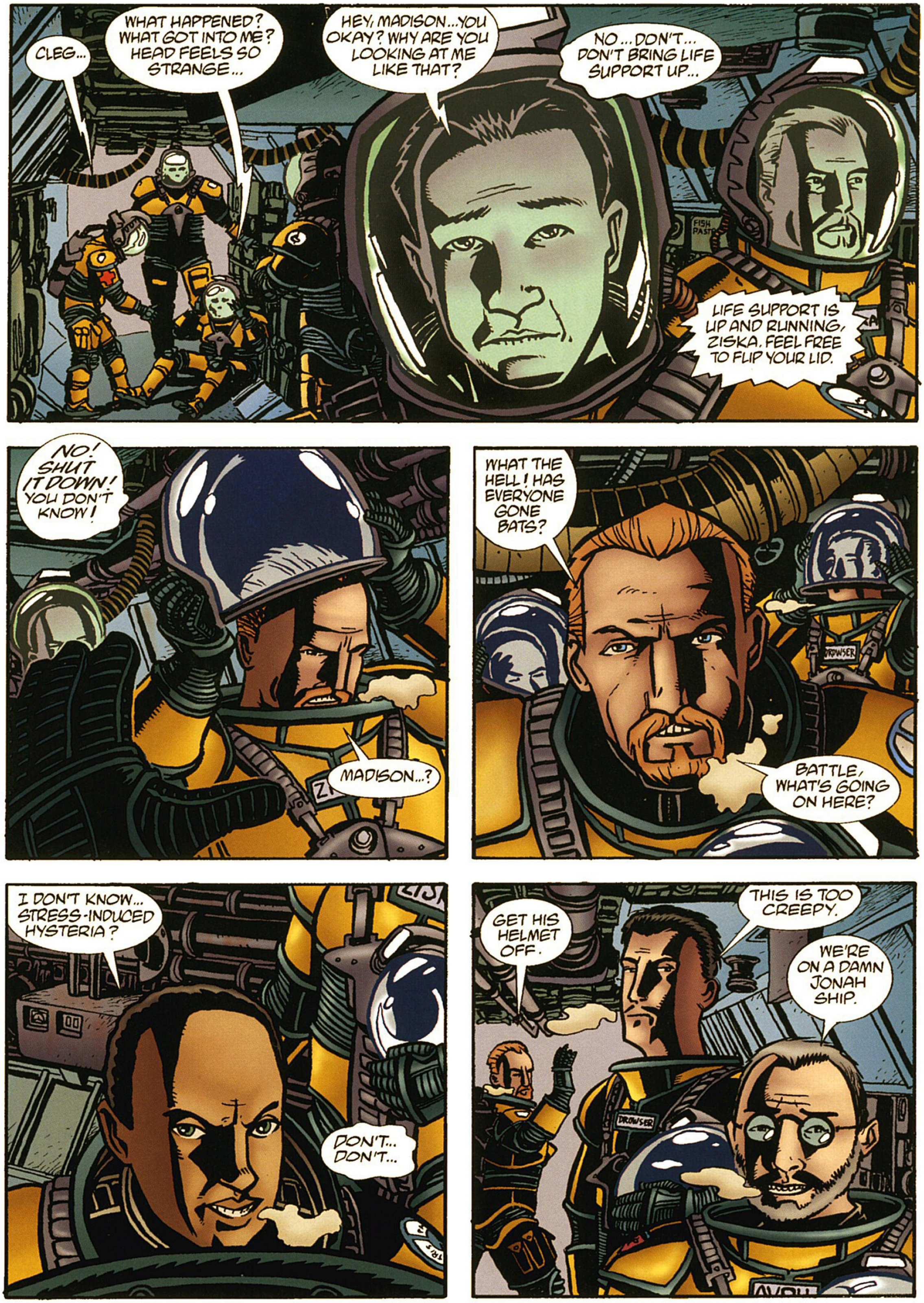

MEN ARE COMING.
AFTER WHAT MUST BE MONTHS OF FLOATING DERELICT, PINNED BY GRAVITY TO THE MIDST OF AN ASTEROID BELT, THE INVULNERABLE LUNAR MARU IS ABOUT TO BE REAWAKENED.
THEY ARE COMING TO INVESTIGATE AND RECOVER THE REMAINS OF THE SAFEST, MOST OPULENT STAR LINER EVER BUILT, THE PROUD FLAGSHIP OF THE RED GIANT LINE.
THEY ARE COMING TO SOLVE A MYSTERY: WHY DID THE LUNAR MARU FALL OUT OF HYPER-SPACE IN THE MIDDLE OF A RUN, LEAVING BEHIND ONLY ONE FRAGMENTARY S.O.S...
...AND THEN ENDLESS SILENCE?



THEY WILL FIND COMPLETE AND UTTER DESTRUCTION.
THEY WILL ALSO FIND THINGS THEY COULD NEVER EXPECT.
THINGS THAT ARE NOT SO DEAD AS THEY SHOULD BE.
THESE SALVORS MUST BE WARNED. THEY MUST BE ALLOWED TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH.
1
SERVICE DOCKING
1
I MUST MAKE AMENDS.

OKAY, TRISPAST WANTS THIS JOB DONE QUICKLY!
REYES, GET YOUR TEAM BELOW AND SEAL OFF THE ASTEROID DAMAGE...
...HYDE, SEE IF YOU CAN GET LIFE SUPPORT BACK ON-LINE.
THE REST OF US WILL BE IN ENGINEERING, GETTING OUR HANDS DIRTY.
NO! DON'T BRING THIS SHIP TO LIFE UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND! DON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE!
ALL THIS UNNECESSARY DEATH. WHAT WENT WRONG?
GIVES ME THE HEEBIE-JEEBIES.
I MUST WARN THEM! I MUST COMMUNICATE WITH THEM. AND TO DO THAT...
CLEG
...I NEED A HOST.

DON'T... DON'T... RAISE LIFE SUPPORT... YET...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CLEG?
NO SIGN OF A STRUGGLE. I THINK HE DIED WHEN LIFE SUPPORT WENT DOWN.
WHY WOULD LIFE SUPPORT JUST GO DOWN?
CRUD. I'D BETTER CHECK THE BRIDGE AND...
HYDE TO ZISKA... WE FOUND LIFE SUPPORT SHUT DOWN BUT APPARENTLY STILL OPERATIONAL. GO FIGURE. YOU WANT IT BACK UP?
NO...
HOLD ON...
ZISKA TO REYES... WHAT'S THE STATUS ON OUR INTEGRITY?
HULL BREACHES IN FORWARD STORAGE AND THIRD CLASS, CONTAINED AND SEALED. WE HAVE INTEGRITY.
GOOD.
ZISKA TO HYDE... BRING THE SYSTEMS UP!
NO! DON'T! YOU DON'T KNOW! YOU DON'T KNOW!
CLEG! WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH--
CLEG! YOU OKAY?!
BATTLE! CLEG'S TALKING CRAZY AND THEN HE COLLAPSED! WEIRD!
NO... NO...


CLEG...
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT GOT INTO ME? HEAD FEELS SO STRANGE...
HEY, MADISON...YOU OKAY? WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
NO... DON'T... DON'T BRING LIFE SUPPORT UP...
LIFE SUPPORT IS UP AND RUNNING, ZISKA. FEEL FREE TO FLIP YOUR LID.
NO! SHUT IT DOWN! YOU DON'T KNOW!
MADISON...?
WHAT THE HELL! HAS EVERYONE GONE BATS?
BATTLE, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
I DON'T KNOW... STRESS-INDUCED HYSTERIA?
DON'T... DON'T...
GET HIS HELMET OFF.
THIS IS TOO CREEPY.
WE'RE ON A DAMN JONAH SHIP.

SHUT UP, AVRIL.
PONSELLE... WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
THEY ARE AWAKE NOW.
?
THEY ARE COMING.
OH, CHRIST... NOW PONSELLE'S GONE LOOPY.
YEAH... AND MADISON'S CALMED DOWN.
THERE! DON'T YOU SEE THEM?
THEY ARE COMING FOR YOU.
AAIIEE!!

OH MY GOD. OH MY GOD.
EVERYBODY BACK! BACK TO DOCKING!
ZISKA TO HYDE AND REYES! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
SURVEY ALPHA UNDER ATTACK BY UNKNOWN HOSTILES! TWO MEN DOWN! GET YOUR TEAMS BACK TO DOCKING NOW!
ZISKA TO THE ST. CLAIR ...DO YOU COPY?
DO YOU COPY, ST. CLAIR?
I TRIED TO WARN YOU...
DROWSER?
HYDE TO ZISKA! SURVEY DELTA RETURNING TO DOCKING!
WHAT'S YOUR STATUS? WHERE'S THE ST. CLA--
AAAAA!!--
--AAAAAA!!

MY GOD! THE AIRLOCK'S CLOSING!
THOSE SONS OF BITCHES! THEY'RE CLOSING THE AIRLOCK!
NOOOO!

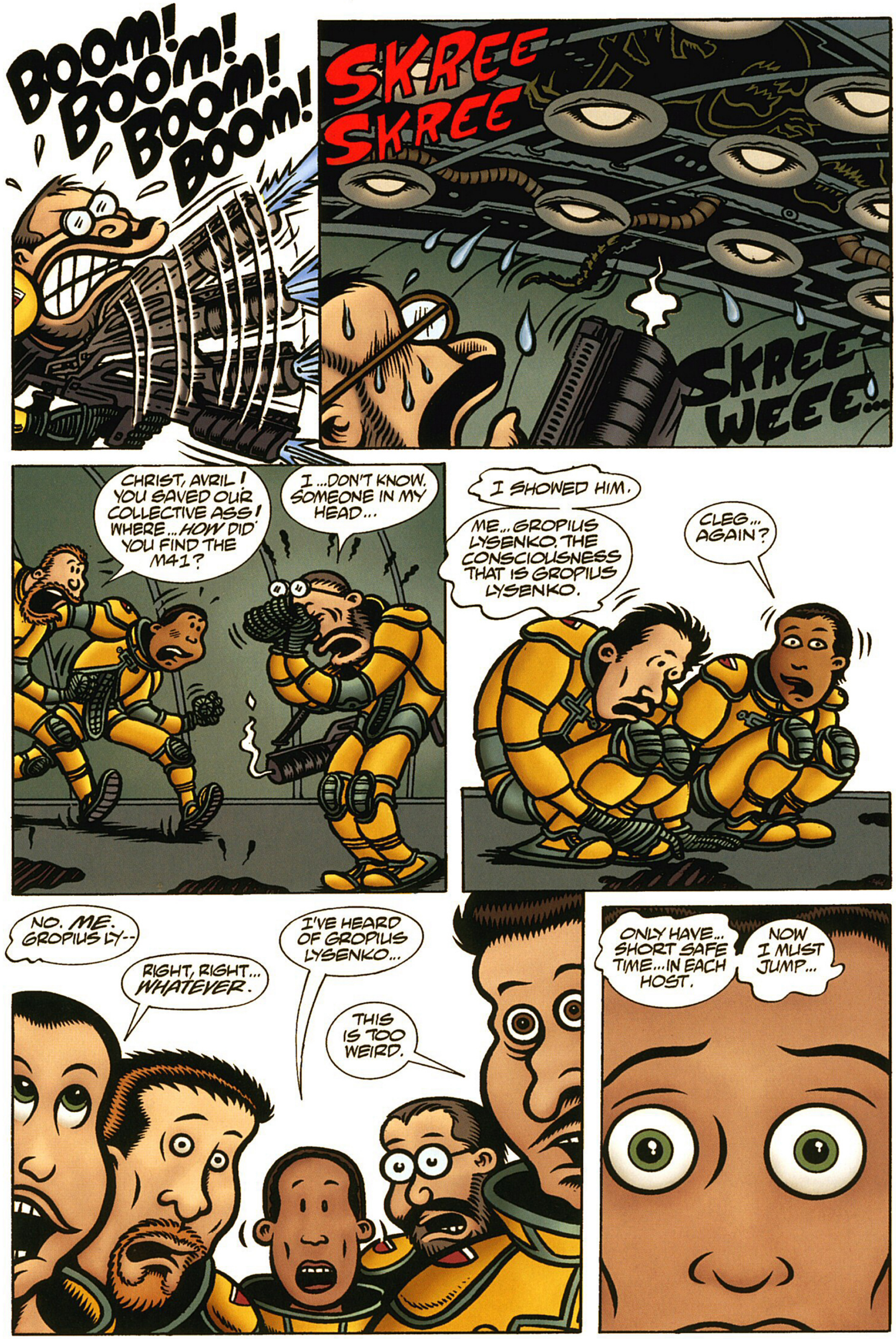
DAMMIT! COME IN, ST. CLAIR!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON, GENET?! WE'RE CODE TRIPLE RED! GET US OUT!!
WHE... WHERE'D IT GO?
I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GOING TO ANSWER, ZISKA. COME OVER HERE... I'VE GOT A VIEW SCREEN UP.
THE SHUTTLE'S PULLED OUT! THEY'RE RETURNING TO THE ST. CLAIR!
SON OF A BITCH.
WHEN ARE THOSE THINGS... COMING BACK?
THEY'LL BE... MORE CAUTIOUS, NOW... THEY'LL WATCH YOU...
OH, GOD... NOW AVRIL IS TALKING CRAZY!
PLEASE... JUST LISTEN TO ME...

HE'S TALKING LIKE YOU DID A FEW MINUTES AGO, DROWSER.
THE BASTARDS! THEY'VE ABANDONED US ON A HAUNTED SHIP!
EVERY-BODY PIPE DOWN!
BATTLE, WE APPARENTLY HAVE NONHUMAN LIFE-FORMS ABOARD THIS SHIP. COULD THE ST. CLAIR BE REGARDING THIS AS A QUARANTINE SITUATION?
IF THEY WERE WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALERTED.
CRUD.
LISTEN UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM HERE, AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT ON OUR OWN.
WE NEED ANSWERS...AND WEAPONS...AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO FIND THEM STANDING AROUND HERE.
WE'RE GOING TO MOVE...CAUTIOUSLY...TO THE BRIDGE. THERE SHOULD BE A CACHE OF ANTI-TERRORIST RIFLES STOWED THERE SOMEPLACE...
OH, COME ON! WE AIN'T NO FRIGGIN' COLONIAL MARINES!
WELL, WE BETTER START THINKIN' LIKE 'EM, SAILOR. NO ONE OUTSIDE IS DOING IT...
WHAT ABOUT BETA AND DELTA TEAMS? WHERE ARE THEY?
CRUD! HYDE... REYES...COME IN! REPORT YOUR STATUS...

...DOES ANYONE COPY?
THEY ARE GONE...ALL GONE...
DON'T YOU START AGAIN, PHI--
LYSENKO... MY NAME IS GROPIUS... LYSENKO...
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF.
LINGUAFOEDA... ACHERONSIS... THE CREATURES ARE ...LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS...
WHAT IS SHE TRYING TO SAY?
YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO FALL APART NOW!
LISTEN TO ME!
PULSE... PULSE RIFLES... HERE...
GROPIUS LYSENKO?
LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS?
ZISKA...SOME OF WHAT PHIBBS'S SAYING IS STARTING TO MAKE SENSE TO ME. MAYBE WE SHOULD LISTEN...
YES! LISTEN TO ME! THERE ARE PULSE--

WE'RE POSSESSED! THE GHOSTS OF THIS DEATH SHIP WANT OUR SOULS..
WAIT!
THEY'RE COMING AGAIN! CAN'T YOU FEEL THEM?!
THEY'RE COMING!
OH, GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD TRUST THIS ...PHENOMENON.
THEY'RE--
OKAY, OKAY!
TAKE IT AS GOSPEL, PEOPLE!
EVERYBODY STAND BACK TO BACK AND--
ABOVE YOU! ABOVE YOU!

PULSE RIFLES...
COMPANY HID PULSE RIFLES...
EVERYWHERE...
IN HERE ?
YES!
NOW CONCENTRATE! REMEMBER HOW TO USE IT!


BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!
SKREE SKREE
SKREE-WEEE...
CHRIST, AVRIL! YOU SAVED OUR COLLECTIVE ASS! WHERE... HOW DID YOU FIND THE M41?
I... DON'T KNOW. SOMEONE IN MY HEAD...
I SHOWED HIM.
ME... GROPIUS LYSENKO. THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT IS GROPIUS LYSENKO.
CLEG... AGAIN?
NO. ME. GROPIUS LY--
RIGHT, RIGHT... WHATEVER.
I'VE HEARD OF GROPIUS LYSENKO...
THIS IS TOO WEIRD.
ONLY HAVE... SHORT SAFE TIME... IN EACH HOST.
NOW I MUST JUMP...

NOW I AM BOUND TO THIS BODY.
PHIBBS?
I'VE HEARD OF A GROPIUS LYSENKO... A RESEARCH BIOCHEMIST.
YES, YES! I AM GROPIUS LYSENKO! I AM HIS CONSCIOUSNESS! NOW COME WITH ME...
YOU MUST TRUST ME... TRY TO UNDERSTAND ME... I MUST MAKE AMENDS...
HURRY... YOU MUST GET TO THE PASSENGER AREAS... THESE SERVICE SECTIONS ARE TOO NARROW ...TOO CLOSED... AND LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS PREFERS STEALTH AND AMBUSH.
WHAT THE HELL IS A CACHE OF M41'S DOING ON A PASSENGER LINER?
HURRY...
CRUD.
BATTLE... YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
I HAVE AN IDEA. I THINK WE SHOULD GO WITH THE FLOW.
:SIGH: WELL, WHATEVER "GROPIUS LYSENKO" IS, IT SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY THING KEEPING US ALIVE.
LET'S FOLLOW PHIBBS, PEOPLE.
ST. CLAIR

BUT LISTEN-- I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, BUT--
I'M OVER HERE NOW.
BATTLE? LYSENKO?
YES. BATTLE IS HOSTING ME.
I THINK I'M STARTING TO GET THE HANG OF THIS.
WE ARE ENTERING A PASSENGER AREA.
GOOD LORD...
LOOK! THERE!

AARRGGHH!
ITS BLOOD... ACTS LIKE... MOLECULAR ACID...
HANG ON, CLEG... THIS'LL TAKE THE EDGE OFF.
:GAG:
I...I CAN'T TAKE THIS... I'M JUST A SALVOR...
COME...YOU MUST KEEP MOVING!

WHERE ARE YOU LEADING US?
I...YOU MUST SEE MY STATEROOM... MY LABORATORY...
YOU OKAY, ZISKA?
FELT LIKE I HAD BEES IN MY HEAD. WHO NOW?
I'VE ROTATED TO DROWSER...
WELL YOU JUST STAY THERE A MINUTE AND LISTEN UP!
YOU STAY THE HELL OUT OF ME! SOMEONE HAS TO KEEP THEIR HEAD CLEAR AND I'M STILL IN CHARGE.
UNDERSTOOD.
IN THIS ROOM THERE ARE ANSWERS...
...AND MAYBE MONSTERS...
...BE VERY CAREFUL.

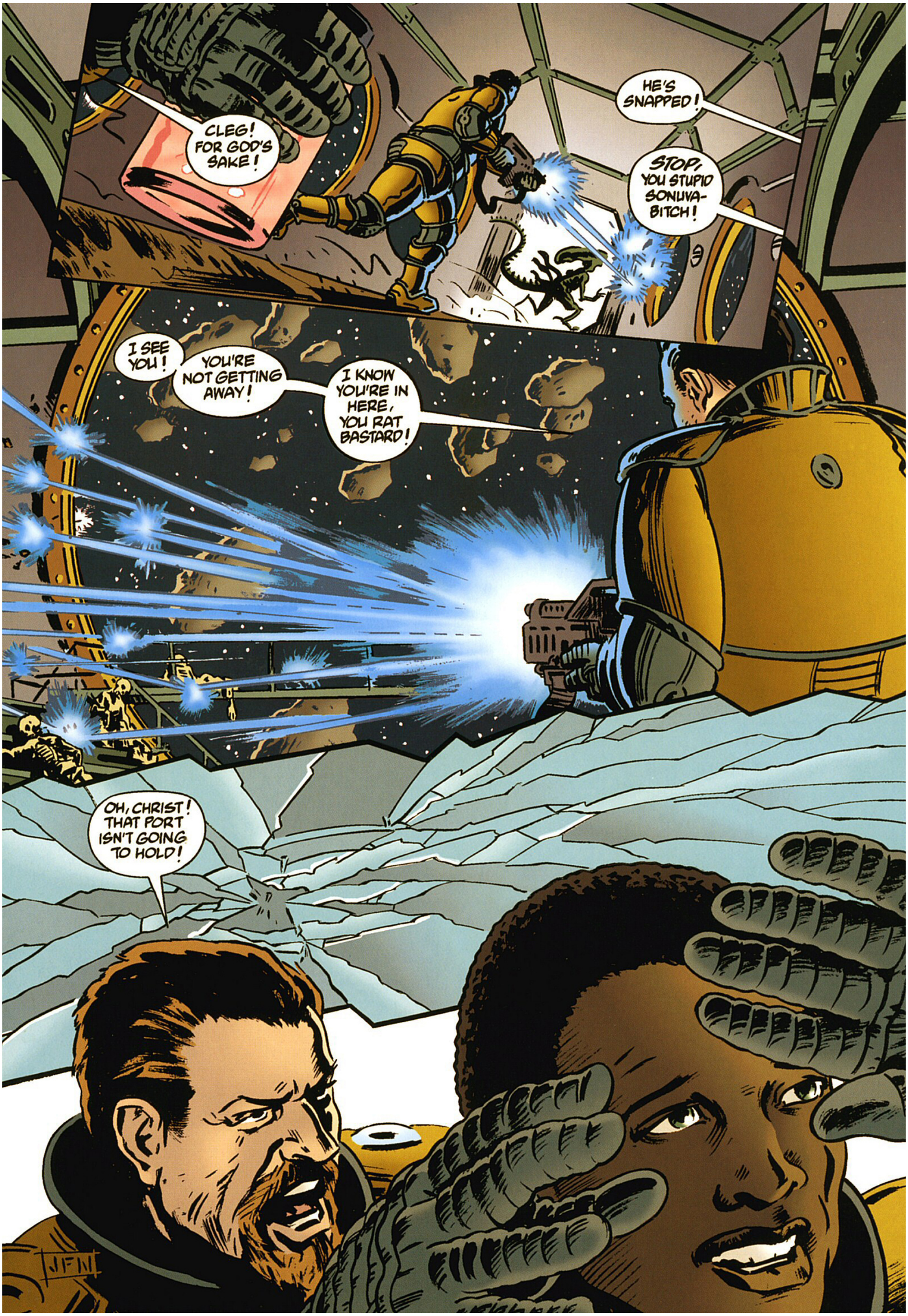
QUITE A SETUP.
THIS WAS MY STATEROOM...
CLICK!
I WAS AN IMPORTANT MAN.
THEY DID NOT BREACH MY LABORATORY! THIS IS VERY GOOD...VERY SIGNIFICANT!
STRANGER AND STRANGER.
THE LUNAR MARU WASN'T BUILT FOR PASSENGER DUTY ONLY.
THE JELLY... IT'S STILL ALL HERE!
THE JELL...?
WAIT A MIN...IS THIS THE STUFF THEY MAKE XENO-ZIP FROM?
YES...
THEN...THEN...THOSE CREATURES...
YES...YES... LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS...THE QUEEN TYPE OF WHICH PRODUCES ROYAL JELLY...

:GROAN: ...I *THOUGHT* I RECOGNIZED HIS NAME.
WHAT...?
NEVER MIND JUST NOW.
QUICKLY... WE MUST TAKE THE JELLY WITH US...
AND MY NOTES!
THERE! GATHER MY NOTES! THEY WILL HELP EXPLAIN!
COME... *NOW* WE WILL GO TO THE BRIDGE...
LEAD ON...
IN FOR A DIME, IN FOR A DOLLAR.
THOSE *THINGS*... LINGUAFO-WHATEVER. ARE THEY WHAT I'M THINKING THEY ARE? ARE THE STORIES TRUE?
I'M THINKING THEY ARE. AND IF LYSENKO'S NOTES CONFIRM IT, GOD HELP US ALL.

LOOK! A VIEW PORT! I CAN SEE THE ST. CLAIR!
THE BASTARDS! WHAT ARE THEY DOING OUT THERE? WAITING FOR US TO GET EATEN?
SOMETHING'S WRONG.
SHE'S LISTING...
...I THINK HER SCREENS ARE DOWN! SHE'S DRIFTING INTO THAT--

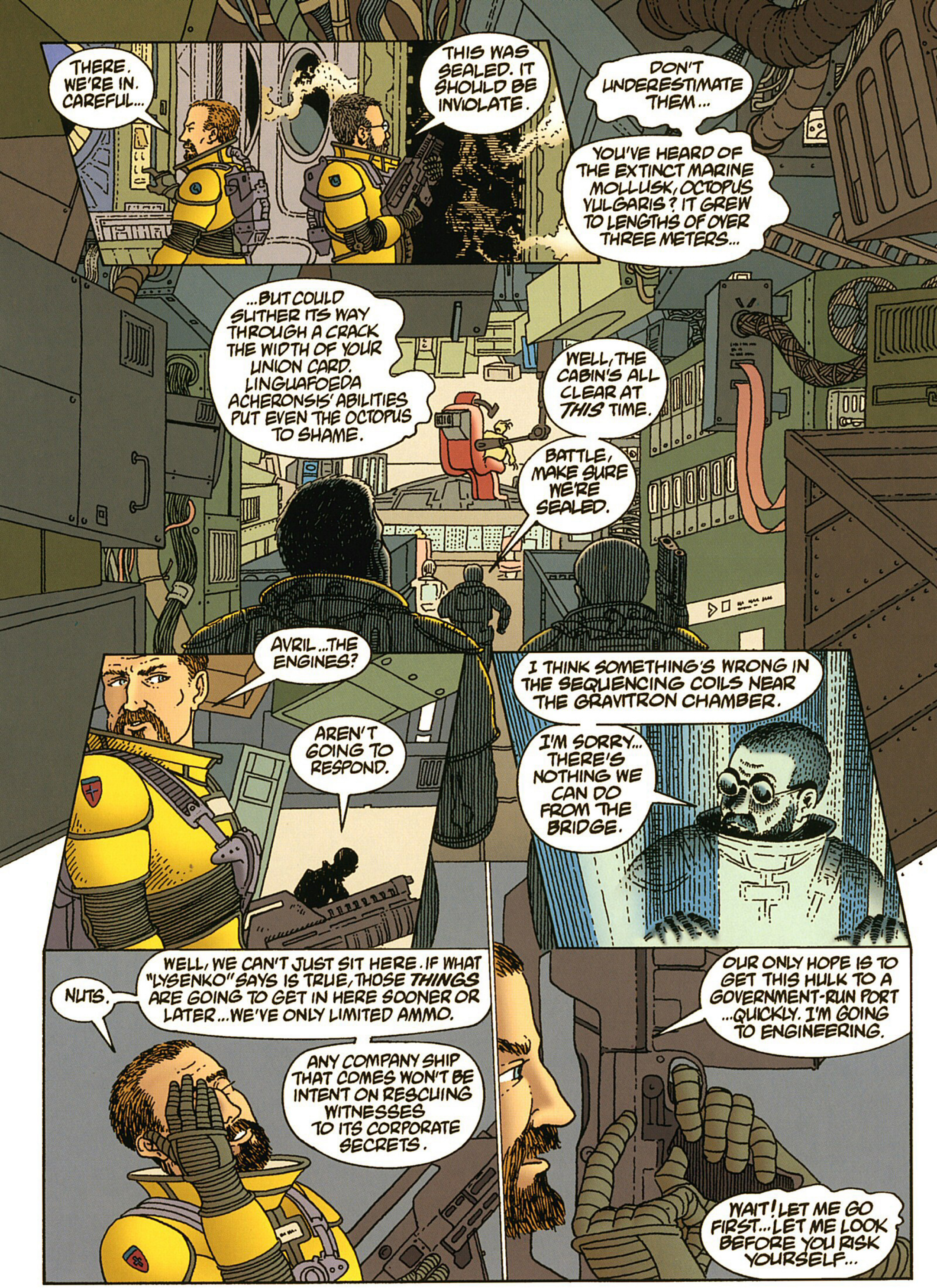
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! WE'RE FRICKIN' MAROONED! WE'RE GOING TO DIE HERE!
LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS IS VERY ADEPT AT SQUEEZING THROUGH TINY WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY.
THE SHUTTLE? ONE OF THOSE THINGS STOWED AWAY ON THE RETURNING SHUTTLE?!
SERVES THE BACKSTABBING BASTARDS RIGHT!
BATTLE, IT'S TIME WE HEARD YOUR THOUGHTS.
DR. GROPIUS LYSENKO IS--WAS--A BRILLIANT BIO-CHEMIST. I REMEMBER READING ABOUT HIM WHEN WEYLAND-YUTANI HIRED HIM AWAY FROM NEO-PHARM. HE'S ALSO KNOWN FOR HIS EXPERIMENTS WITH CONSCIOUSNESS-ALTERING SUBSTANCES.
BUT, BASED ON WHAT WE'VE SEEN HERE, I'D GUESS HE AND WEYLAND-YUTANI WERE ALSO INVOLVED WITH THE ILLEGAL TRANSPORTATION OF LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS...
...ON THIS, A PASSENGER LINER!
BUT... THE LABORATORY! HOW...?
I'M SURE IF WE CHECKED WE'D FIND THAT WEYLAND-YUTANI OWNS THE RED GIANT LINE...
...JUST AS THEY OWN TRISPAST SALVAGE.
CRUD.
OH, YEAH. THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES.
THIS WHOLE OPERATION HAS BEEN KEPT WITHIN THE COMPANY. WE WERE THE EXPENDABLE FIRST WAVE SENT IN TO HELP THEM DETERMINE JUST HOW BIG A MESS THEY HAD ON THEIR HANDS.
THERE WILL BE NO RESCUE SHIP COMING.
PHIBBS

WHA--?
YAAAAH!!
GIT!
GIT AWAY FROM ME!
CLEG!
GOOD LORD! MORE OF THEM!


CLEG! FOR GOD'S SAKE!
HE'S SNAPPED!
STOP, YOU STUPID SONUVA-BITCH!
I SEE YOU!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN HERE, YOU RAT BASTARD!
OH, CHRIST! THAT PORT ISN'T GOING TO HOLD!

SKRRASSH
SEAL THE BULKHEAD!
OH, GOD...
OH, GOD...
WREEEP
ONE... HE GOT ONE OF THEM...
HUH?

THERE ARE STILL EIGHT OF THE TEN LEFT.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, LYSENKO.
C'MON... LET'S GET TO THE BRIDGE.
POOR CLEG...
LOOK!
CRIPES!
DAMN THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE...
...LIKE ROACHES!
THEY ARE FOLLOWING... WATCHING.
SO THIS IS THE BRIDGE OF A STAR LINER...
CONTROL COMMAND IS IN THROUGH HERE...
I THINK I CAN GAIN ACCESS.


THERE. WE'RE IN. CAREFUL...
THIS WAS SEALED. IT SHOULD BE INVIOLATE.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THEM...
YOU'VE HEARD OF THE EXTINCT MARINE MOLLUSK, OCTOPUS VULGARIS? IT GREW TO LENGTHS OF OVER THREE METERS...
...BUT COULD SLITHER ITS WAY THROUGH A CRACK THE WIDTH OF YOUR UNION CARD. LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS' ABILITIES PUT EVEN THE OCTOPUS TO SHAME.
WELL, THE CABIN'S ALL CLEAR AT THIS TIME.
BATTLE, MAKE SURE WE'RE SEALED.
AVRIL...THE ENGINES?
AREN'T GOING TO RESPOND.
I THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG IN THE SEQUENCING COILS NEAR THE GRAVITRON CHAMBER.
I'M SORRY... THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FROM THE BRIDGE.
NUTS.
WELL, WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE. IF WHAT "LYSENKO" SAYS IS TRUE, THOSE THINGS ARE GOING TO GET IN HERE SOONER OR LATER...WE'VE ONLY LIMITED AMMO.
ANY COMPANY SHIP THAT COMES WON'T BE INTENT ON RESCUING WITNESSES TO ITS CORPORATE SECRETS.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO GET THIS HULK TO A GOVERNMENT-RUN PORT ...QUICKLY. I'M GOING TO ENGINEERING.
WAIT! LET ME GO FIRST...LET ME LOOK BEFORE YOU RISK YOURSELF...

?
LYSENKO?
HE'S GONE...
IT IS DREADFUL WHEN I COME SO NEAR THESE CREATURES.
I CAN FEEL MYSELF BEING SUCKED TOWARDS THE GREAT VACUUM THAT LIES WITHIN THEIR INCOMPREHENSIBLE BRAINS...
...AND IN THAT VACUUM SQUATS A BLACK SPIDER, CHATTERING MINDLESSLY AND WAITING TO SPRING.
YES...HERE IS THE NEST... AS I SUSPECTED...
...CLOGGING AVRIL'S SEQUENCING COILS.
NOW I MUST FIND THE STRENGTH TO PULL AWAY.
OH, NO...YOU DON'T HAVE ME YET...

HEY ZISKA... LISTEN TO THIS--
I'VE BEEN SCANNING LYSENKO'S NOTES AND I THINK I'VE GOT AN IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON HERE.
WEYLAND-YUTANI HAS APPARENTLY BEEN USING THEIR RED GIANT LINE SHIPS FOR YEARS AS COVER FOR SECRET--PROBABLY HIGHLY ILLEGAL --EXPERIMENTS ON THIS ALIEN SPECIES, LINGUAFOEDA ACHERONSIS.
WHAT BETTER, MORE UNTHINKABLE, COVER THAN A PASSENGER SHIP?
"ANYWAY, LYSENKO WAS THEIR MAN ON THE LUNAR MARU. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT SEEMS HE WAS RESEARCHING THE PSYCHOACTIVE PROPERTIES OF CERTAIN ROYAL JELLY DERIVATIVES.
"IT ALSO APPEARS HE BEGAN SAMPLING HIS OWN WARES. HE EXPERIMENTED ON HIMSELF.
"NOW HIS NOTES GET INCREASINGLY HARD TO DECIPHER, AS IF HIS COGNITIVE FACILITIES WERE DISINTEGRATING.
"I THINK I'M READING THAT HIS INTAKE OF A JELLY VARIANT ALLOWED HIM TO SEPARATE HIS CONSCIOUSNESS--HIS MIND --FROM HIS PHYSICAL FORM!
"THEN HE DISCOVERED THAT HE COULD... THROW... HIS MIND INTO THE BODIES OF OTHERS..."
...EVEN TO THE POINT OF CONTROLLING THE OTHERS' THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS! UNBELIEVABLE...I KNOW.
I'M WILLING TO BELIEVE ANYTHING ABOUT NOW.
ZISKA
YOUR STORY EXPLAINS OUR OUTBREAK OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS...AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT COMES WITH THEM.
I CAN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE AT ALL OF THE LAST ENTRIES. I GET THE SENSE THAT, IN HIS CRUMBLING MENTAL STATE, LYSENKO DID SOMETHING HORRIBLY WRONG--
I MEAN A REAL ATROCITY.
SOMETHING THAT BROUGHT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO... INTO...

THESE SPECULATIONS ARE CLOSE...CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE TRUTH.
BATTLE?
THIS IS GROPIUS LYSENKO SPEAKING.
WHAT I DID TO THAT PASSENGER WAS INSANE. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE MIND--THE ID--OF MY PARTICULAR HOST AFFECTS ME GREATLY. SHIP SECURITY CAME FOR ME AND I RAN LIKE A FRIGHTENED ANIMAL TO THE MOST CAREFULLY HIDDEN CHAMBER IN THIS SHIP OF SECRETS...
"...THE EGG CHAMBER.
"I WORKED SWIFTLY TO REMOVE THE TIMER CLAMPS FROM THE THIRTY EGGS, THINKING HOW CRAFTY I WAS.
"SECURITY TRACKED ME TO THE CHAMBER, AS I KNEW THEY WOULD. THEIR IGNORANT CURIOSITY LED THEM STRAIGHT TO THE WAITING EGGS... AND THEIR DESTINY.
"BUT I WAS CARELESS.
"AS THE PARASITIC LARVAL STAGE OF THE LINGUAFOEDA CLASPED ONTO MY SKULL, I CAST MY MIND OUT...NEVER TO RETURN TO ITS HOME.
"TEN EGGS HATCHED. TEN LARVAE FOUND HOSTS. THEY GREW STRONG AND METAMORPHOSED INTO THOSE CREATURES YOU ENCOUNTERED TODAY.

"TERROR SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE *LUNAR MARU* IN A SINGLE DAY.
"WEYLAND-YUTANI ALWAYS PLANTS SPECIAL OPERATIVES IN THE CREWS OF ITS SHIPS... SYNTHETIC SLEEPERS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO ELIMINATE OR CONTAIN SITUATIONS THAT COULD PROVE DETRIMENTAL TO THE COMPANY'S WELL-BEING.
"TO MASK THIS PUBLICLY INADMISSIBLE *LINGUAFOEDA* DISASTER, THE OPERATIVES ELECTED TO INITIATE ANOTHER, MORE PRESENTABLE, DISASTER.
"THEY SEIZED CONTROL OF THE *LUNAR MARU* AND SHUT DOWN ALL SYSTEMS. THIS, OF COURSE, KILLED EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD ON BOARD.
"UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, *LINGUAFOEDA* IS FAR MORE DURABLE THAN ANY HUMAN. THE VACUUM OF SPACE PROVIDES MERELY A DREAMLESS HIBERNATION BETWEEN ITS REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.
"THAT IS WHAT OCCURRED...ON THE FINAL DAY..."
I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY... I AM AT FAULT...I MUST MAKE AMENDS...
ONLY I CAN SAVE YOU...
GOD... SHE'S SHAKING LIKE CRAZY...
WHAT I SAW... IN ENGINEERING... AVRIL WAS RIGHT... THE SEQUENCING COILS... THEY'VE BUILT THEIR NEST... IN THE SEQUENCING COILS...

:WHEW:... SHARING TWO MINDS TAKES A LOT OUT OF A BODY...
I'M SORRY... I STAYED TOO LONG.
HE'S IN PHIBBS NOW.
MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES AND MY HOST'S NERVOUS SYSTEM BEGINS TO DECAY.
BUT BATTLE WAS UNUSUALLY... RECEPTIVE.
MAYBE THAT EXPLAINS WHY... WHY I'M RETAINING YOUR MEMORIES. I KNOW WHAT YOU TOLD US IS TRUE. I KNOW THAT YOU WERE AN EVIL MAN... YOU DID TERRIBLE THINGS...
...BUT I ALSO KNOW YOU'VE REPENTED.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOU--
ZISKA! I KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO!
THIS IS OUR WEAPON!
LYSENKO WAS GENETICALLY ALTERING LINGUAFOEDA ROYAL JELLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO OPEN THEIR ALIEN CONSCIOUSNESS TO A HUMAN SCALE OF UNDER-STANDING... THE EFFECT ON HIS OWN CONSCIOUSNESS WAS UNFORESEEN.
YES! YES! IT WAS TO BE A GRAND EXPERIMENT! BUT THINGS DID NOT GO AS INTENDED...
UNPREDICTABLY, HIS EXPERIMENTS REVEALED THAT THE ALTERED JELLY GREATLY ACCELERATED LINGUAFOEDA'S REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE...
...BUT THE PSYCHIC ENHANCE-MENTS DID NOT SIT WELL WITH THE LARVAE...
I DON'T SEE HOW THAT'S GOING TO HELP...

OH, NO...
CRUD...
DROWSER!!
BATTLE!

WE DON'T USE PULSE RIFLES AT CLOSE QUARTERS UNLESS WE ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO!
REMEMBER HOW THEIR BLOOD BURNED CLEG!
THE TORCH SEEMS TO BE OUR MOST EFFECTIVE DETERRENT.
YEAH, BUT YOU CAN'T COVER EVERY ANGLE. THEY'LL FLANK US, SOONER OR LATER...
JEEZUS! WE'VE BACKED INTO A DEAD END!
WAIT! LOOK! A FREIGHT TUBE!
EVERY-BODY IN?
AVRIL, GET US THE HELL TO ENGINEERING!
HANG ON TIGHT... THIS WASN'T BUILT FOR COMFORT.

WE'RE H-HERE...
EVERYONE OKAY?
THE TUBE MAY BE THE SAFEST THING ON THIS SHIP.
GOOD LORD! SURVIVORS!
THERE ARE SURVIVORS DOWN HERE!
NO! STAY AWAY FROM THEM!
THEY ARE THE OPERATIVES!
POUND

THE TORCH IS STARTING TO RUN LOW.
QUICKLY! THEY ARE COMING!
JUST GET ME TO THE EGGS...
LOOK! PARTICLE SHIELDS! LET'S PUT 'EM TO USE!

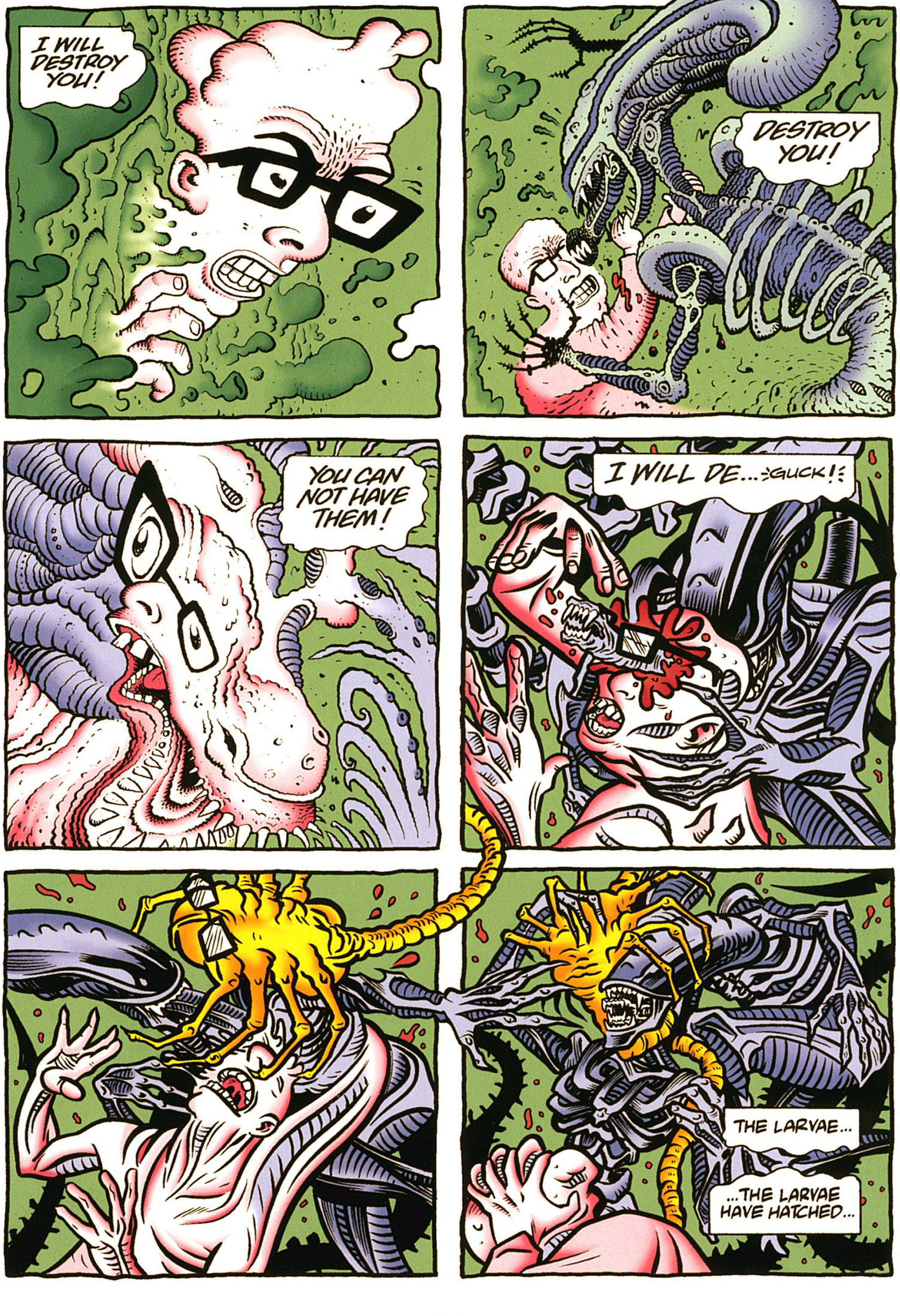
JESUS AND MARY!
HERE'S EXACTLY WHAT I NEED...
A GREASE GUN?!
MY JELLY DELIVERY SYSTEM. I HOPE THIS WORKS...
IT BETTER.
WE'RE JUST ABOUT OUT OF WIGGLE ROOM...
WELL, THEN, LET'S MAKE SOME SPACE!
CHEAP BULK-HEADS.

THE NEST!
GOT TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE EGGS TO SPRAY THEM WITH THE GREASE GUN!
FORGET IT...
I DON'T THINK...
...WE'RE GOING TO GET...
...ANY CLOSER!
ARAGONÉS 97.

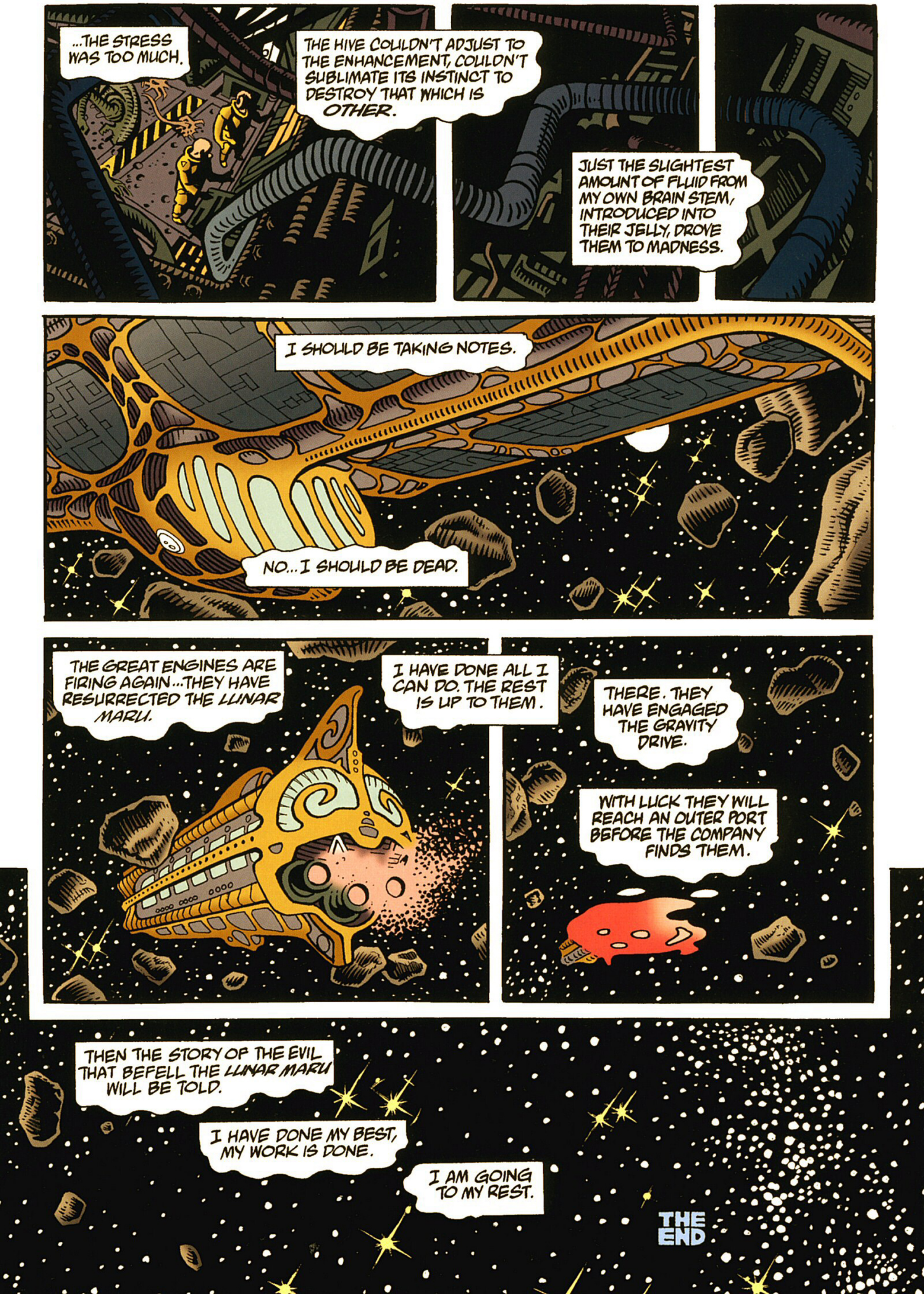
UGH!
THE SHIELDS HAVE ABOUT HAD IT!
WAIT...
THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM!
TRY AND HOLD 'EM JUST A MINUTE MORE!
HOPE YOU'VE GOT SOME GAS LEFT IN YOU...

AAAAARROOOOOOO!
OKAY, I GOT YOUR JELLY TO THE EGGS!
NOW WHAT?
NOW WE HOLD ON AND HOPE FOR ALL HELL TO BREAK LOO--
ZISKA!!!

CLIK
CLIK
CLIK
NO! NOT NOW!
THEY ARE SO DREADFUL...
I CAN NOT LET THIS HAPPEN!
YOU CAN NOT HAVE HIM!
I WILL DESTROY YOU FROM WITHIN!


I WILL DESTROY YOU!
DESTROY YOU!
YOU CAN NOT HAVE THEM!
I WILL DE... GUCK!
THE LARVAE...
...THE LARVAE HAVE HATCHED...

...AND THEY ARE ALL *PSYCHOTIC*.
DREADFUL THINGS...
THEY ARE TEARING ME APART...
IT IS OVER.
THE ALTERED JELLY HAS SUCCEEDED IN A WAY I NEVER ORIGINALLY INTENDED.
TWENTY LARVAE BORN TO THE COLONY. ALL WITH PSYCHIC ABILITIES WITH WHICH THEY COULD NOT COPE.
THE VACUUM INSIDE THEIR MINDS TURNED OUT AND SMASHED INTO THEIR FELLOWS...


...THE STRESS WAS TOO MUCH.
THE HIVE COULDN'T ADJUST TO THE ENHANCEMENT, COULDN'T SUBLIMATE ITS INSTINCT TO DESTROY THAT WHICH IS *OTHER*.
JUST THE SLIGHTEST AMOUNT OF FLUID FROM MY OWN BRAIN STEM, INTRODUCED INTO THEIR JELLY, DROVE THEM TO MADNESS.
I SHOULD BE TAKING NOTES.
NO...I SHOULD BE DEAD.
THE GREAT ENGINES ARE FIRING AGAIN...THEY HAVE RESURRECTED THE *LUNAR MARU*.
I HAVE DONE ALL I CAN DO. THE REST IS UP TO THEM.
THERE. THEY HAVE ENGAGED THE GRAVITY DRIVE.
WITH LUCK THEY WILL REACH AN OUTER PORT BEFORE THE COMPANY FINDS THEM.
THEN THE STORY OF THE EVIL THAT BEFELL THE *LUNAR MARU* WILL BE TOLD.
I HAVE DONE MY BEST, MY WORK IS DONE.
I AM GOING TO MY REST.
THE END

HAVOC

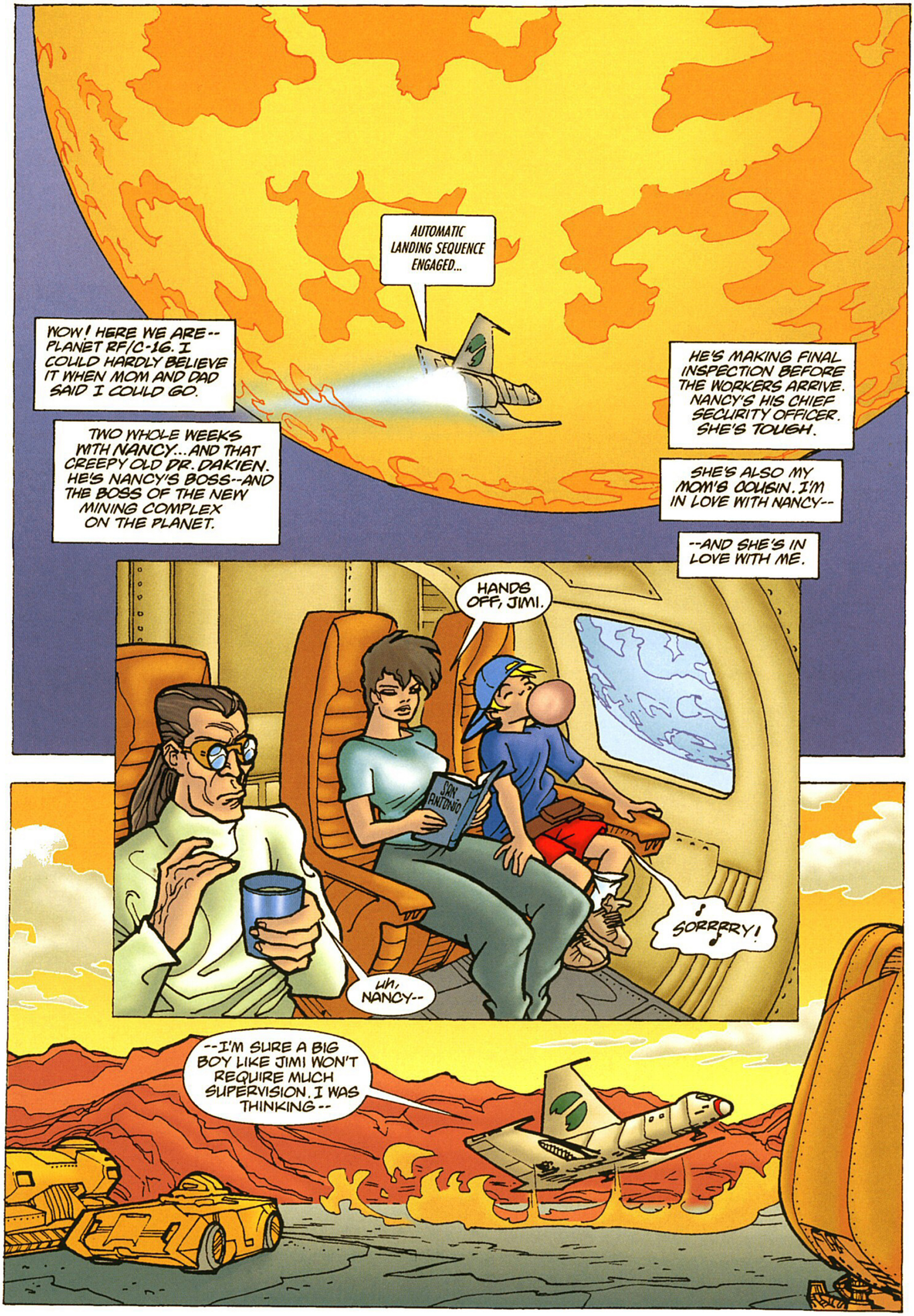
script
MARK SCHULTZ

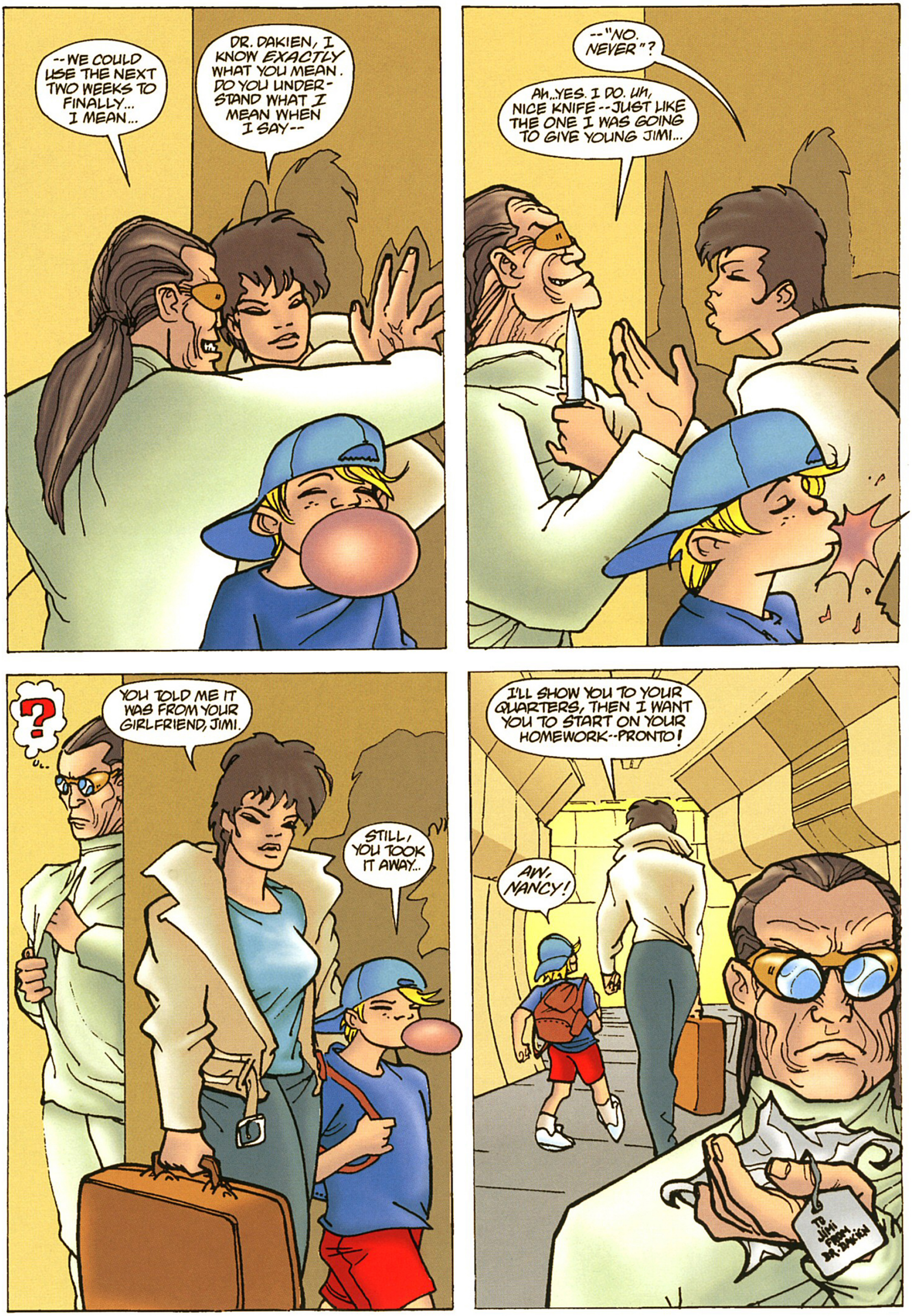
art
LEIF JONES and **JOHN STOKES**
DUNCAN FEGREDO
D'ISRAELI
JOHN TOTLEBEN
ARTHUR ADAMS
GARY GIANNI and **GEOFF DARROW**
GEORGE PRATT
IGOR KORDEY
PAUL LEE
JOHN K. SNYDER III
MARK A. NELSON
PETE BAGGE
BRIAN HORTON
DAVE TAYLOR
KELLEY JONES
GUY DAVIS
KELLIE STROM
JAY STEPHENS
JERRY BINGHAM
KEVIN NOWLAN
FRANK TERAN
JOEL NAPRSTEK
TRAVIS CHAREST
P. CRAIG RUSSELL
AIDAN POTTS
SEAN PHILLIPS
REBECCA GUAY
JON MUTH
KILIAN PLUNKETT
RON RANDALL
JOHN POUND
GENE HA
VANIA ZAROULIOV
SERGIO ARAGONÉS
JOHN PAUL LEON
DEREK THOMPSON
DAVID LLOYD
MOEBIUS
DAVE COOPER
MIKE ALLRED
TONY MILLIONAIRE

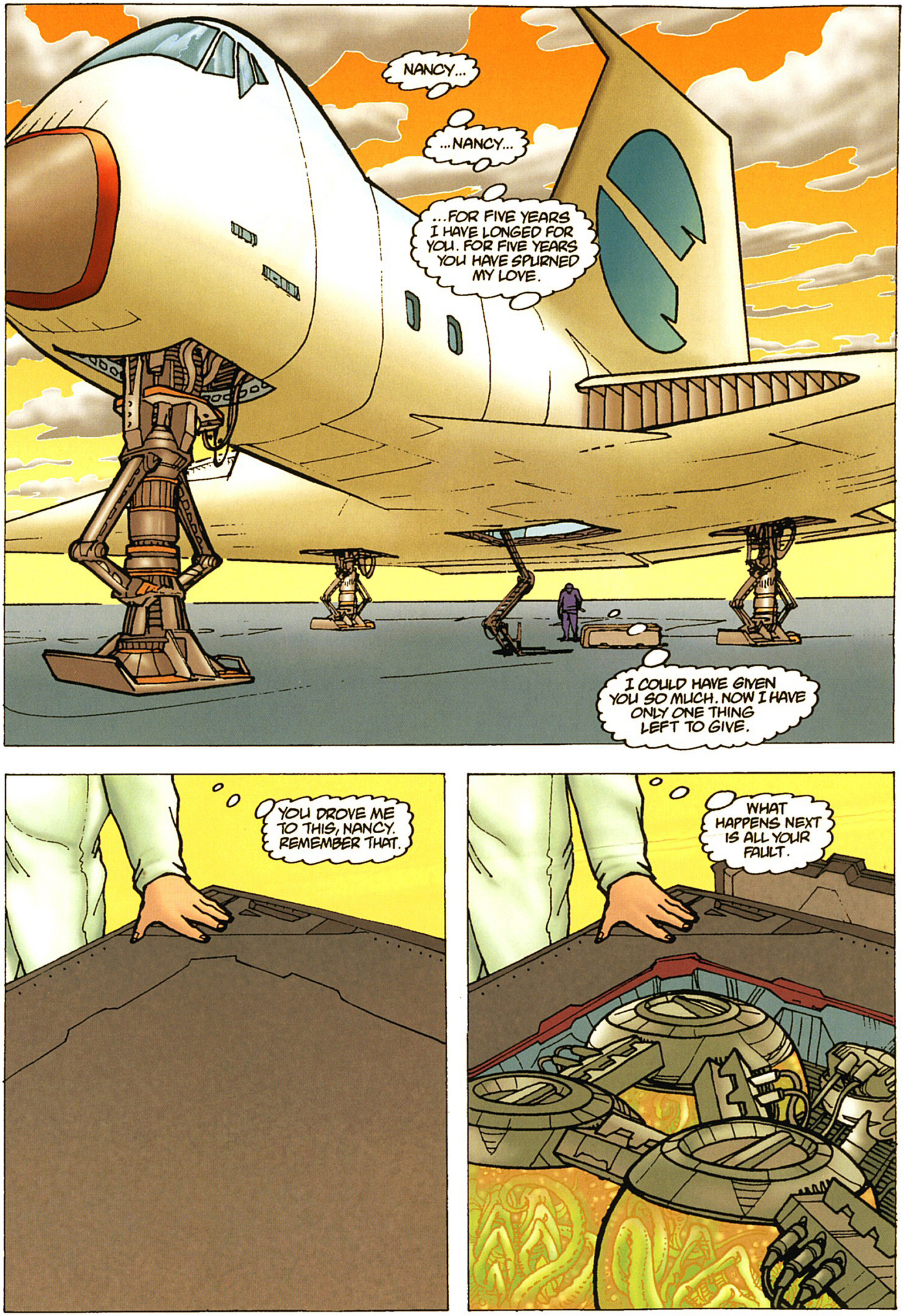
colors
PAMELA RAMBO

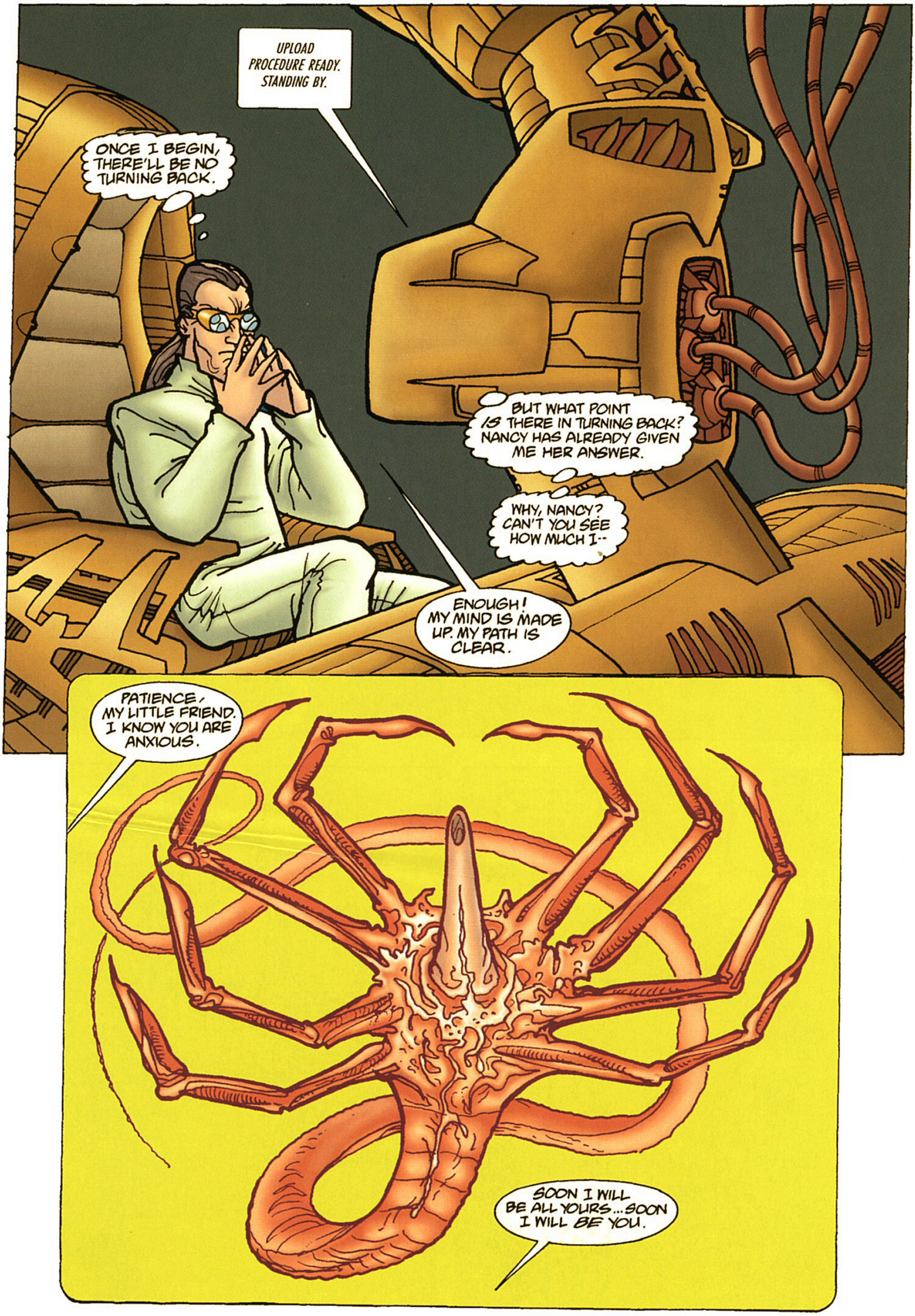
lettering
CLEM ROBINS

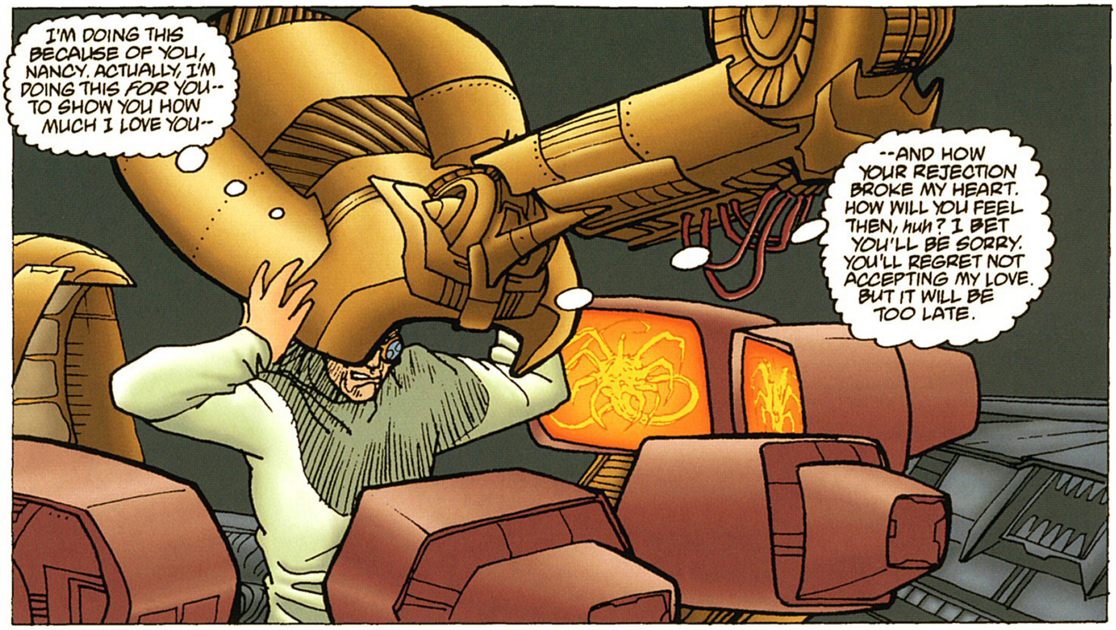
title illustration
KENT WILLIAMS

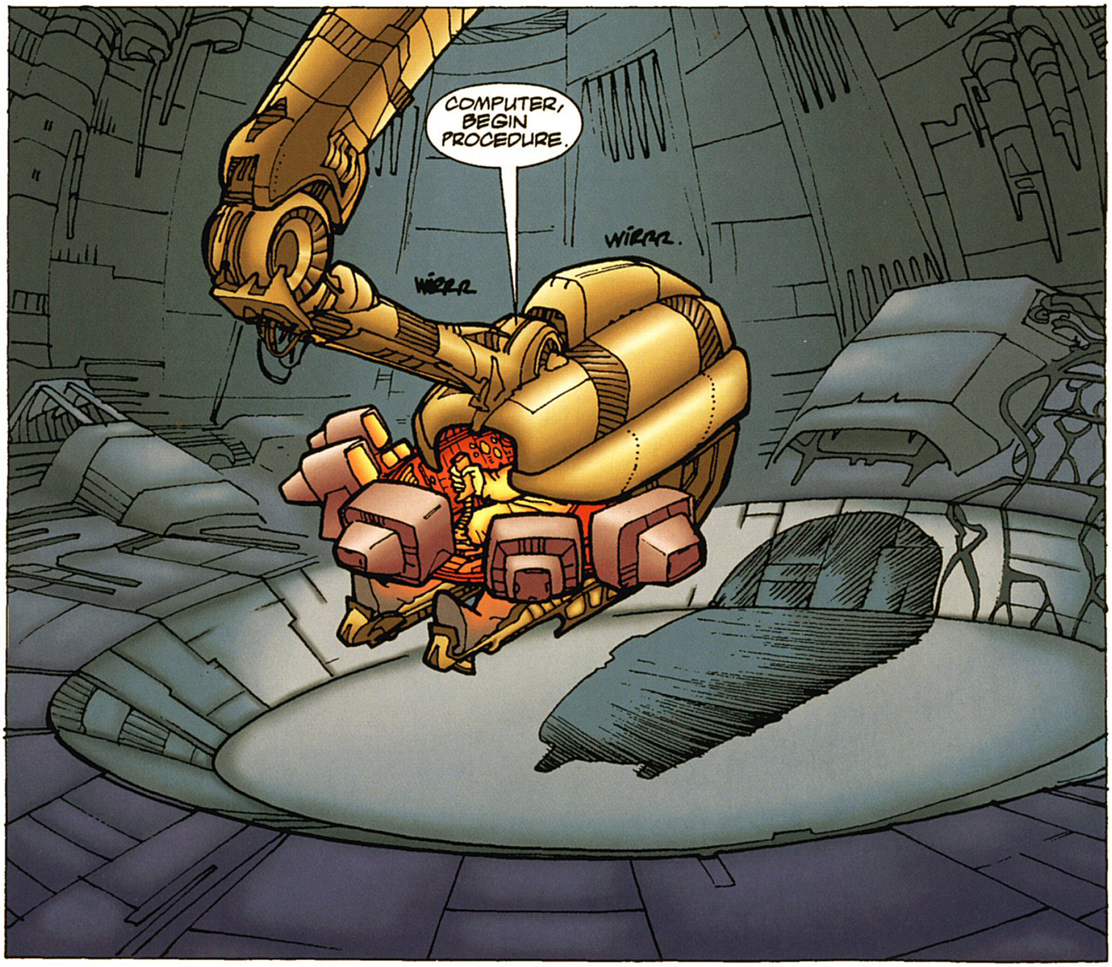

AUTOMATIC LANDING SEQUENCE ENGAGED...
WOW! HERE WE ARE-- PLANET RF/C-16. I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE IT WHEN MOM AND DAD SAID I COULD GO.
TWO WHOLE WEEKS WITH NANCY...AND THAT CREEPY OLD DR. DAKIEN. HE'S NANCY'S BOSS--AND THE BOSS OF THE NEW MINING COMPLEX ON THE PLANET.
HE'S MAKING FINAL INSPECTION BEFORE THE WORKERS ARRIVE. NANCY'S HIS CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER. SHE'S TOUGH.
SHE'S ALSO MY MOM'S COUSIN. I'M IN LOVE WITH NANCY--
--AND SHE'S IN LOVE WITH ME.
HANDS OFF, JIMI.
SAN ANTONIO
SORRRRY!
uh, NANCY--
--I'M SURE A BIG BOY LIKE JIMI WON'T REQUIRE MUCH SUPERVISION, I WAS THINKING--

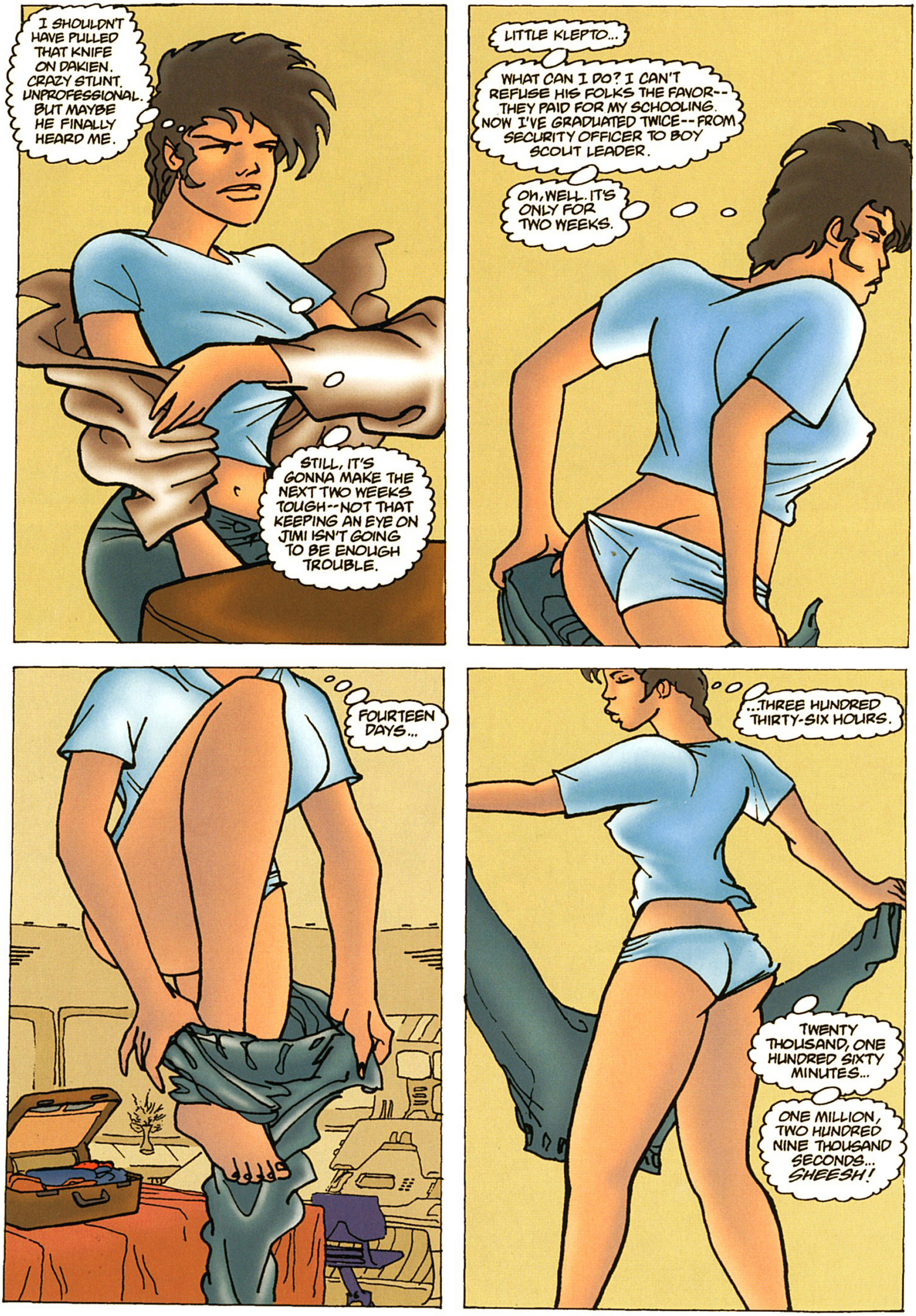

--WE COULD USE THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO FINALLY... I MEAN...
DR. DAKIEN, I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN WHEN I SAY--
--"NO. NEVER"?
AH...YES. I DO. UH, NICE KNIFE--JUST LIKE THE ONE I WAS GOING TO GIVE YOUNG JIMI...
?
YOU TOLD ME IT WAS FROM YOUR GIRLFRIEND, JIMI.
STILL, YOU TOOK IT AWAY...
I'LL SHOW YOU TO YOUR QUARTERS, THEN I WANT YOU TO START ON YOUR HOMEWORK--PRONTO!
AW, NANCY!
TO JIMI FROM DR. DAKIEN

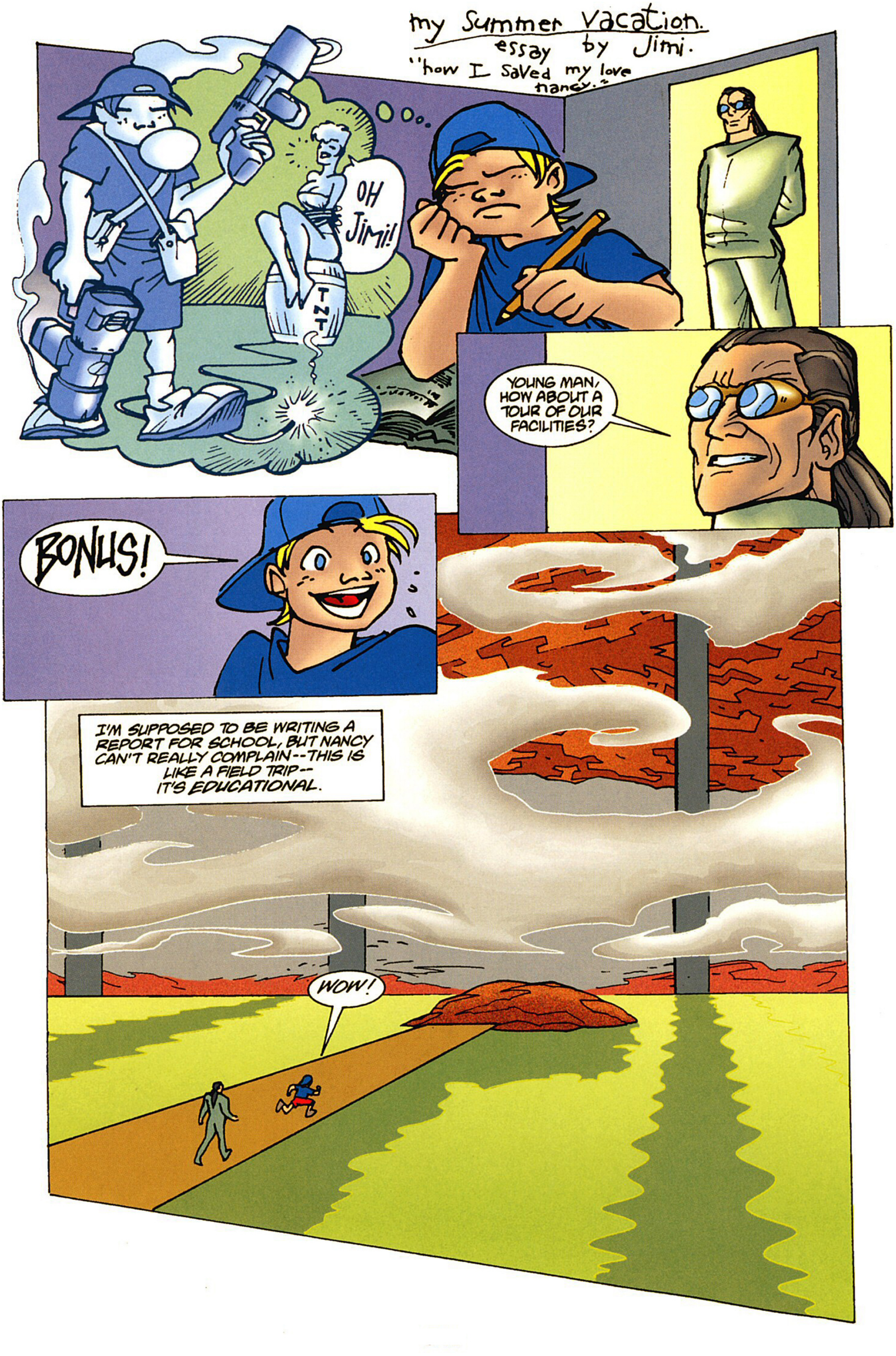

NANCY...
...NANCY...
...FOR FIVE YEARS I HAVE LONGED FOR YOU. FOR FIVE YEARS YOU HAVE SPURNED MY LOVE.
I COULD HAVE GIVEN YOU SO MUCH. NOW I HAVE ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO GIVE.
YOU DROVE ME TO THIS, NANCY. REMEMBER THAT.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS ALL YOUR FAULT.

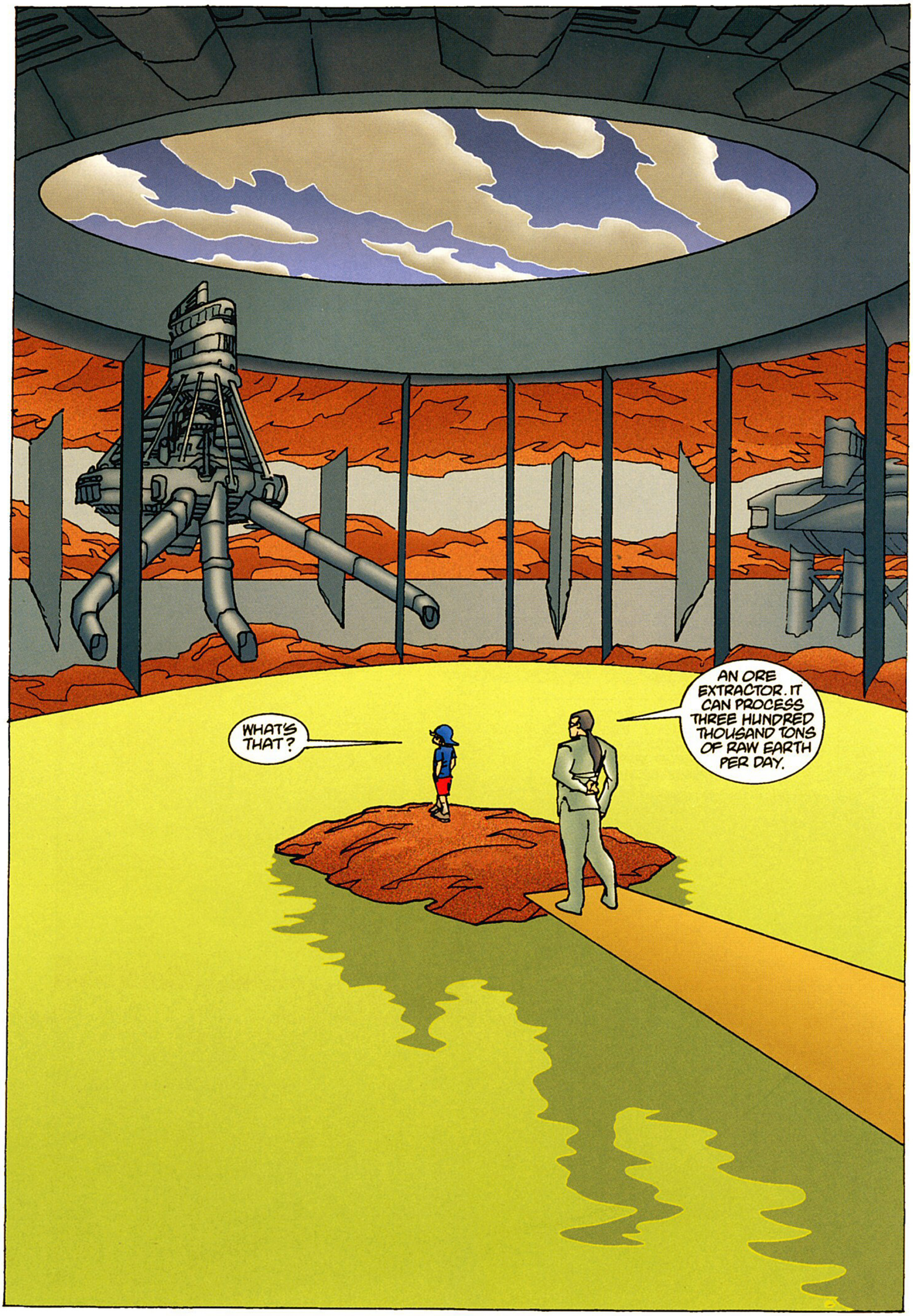

UPLOAD PROCEDURE READY. STANDING BY.
ONCE I BEGIN, THERE'LL BE NO TURNING BACK.
BUT WHAT POINT IS THERE IN TURNING BACK? NANCY HAS ALREADY GIVEN ME HER ANSWER.
WHY, NANCY? CAN'T YOU SEE HOW MUCH I--
ENOUGH! MY MIND IS MADE UP. MY PATH IS CLEAR.
PATIENCE, MY LITTLE FRIEND. I KNOW YOU ARE ANXIOUS.
SOON I WILL BE ALL YOURS...SOON I WILL BE YOU.

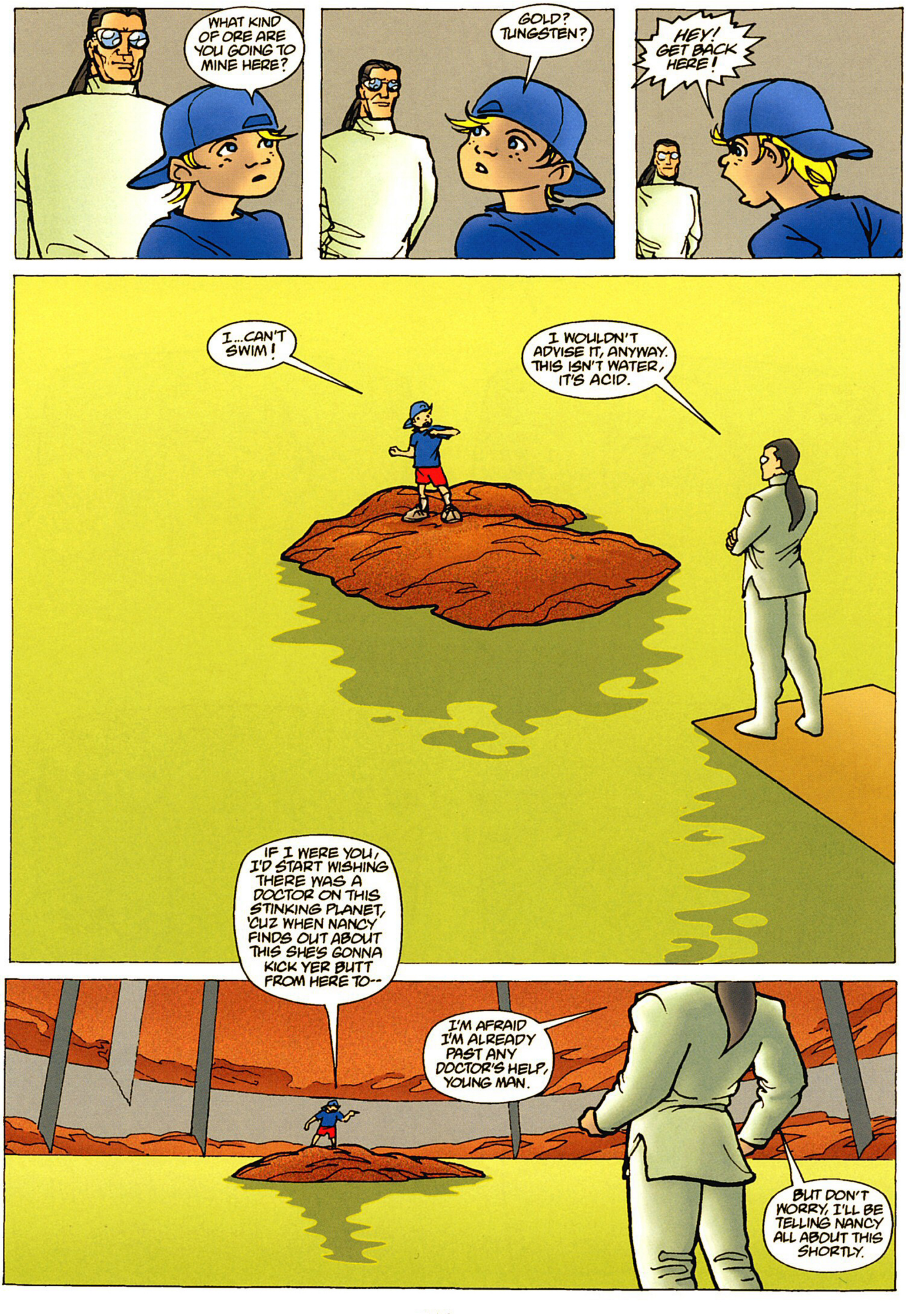

I'M DOING THIS BECAUSE OF YOU, NANCY. ACTUALLY, I'M DOING THIS FOR YOU-- TO SHOW YOU HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU--
--AND HOW YOUR REJECTION BROKE MY HEART. HOW WILL YOU FEEL THEN, HUH? I BET YOU'LL BE SORRY. YOU'LL REGRET NOT ACCEPTING MY LOVE. BUT IT WILL BE TOO LATE.

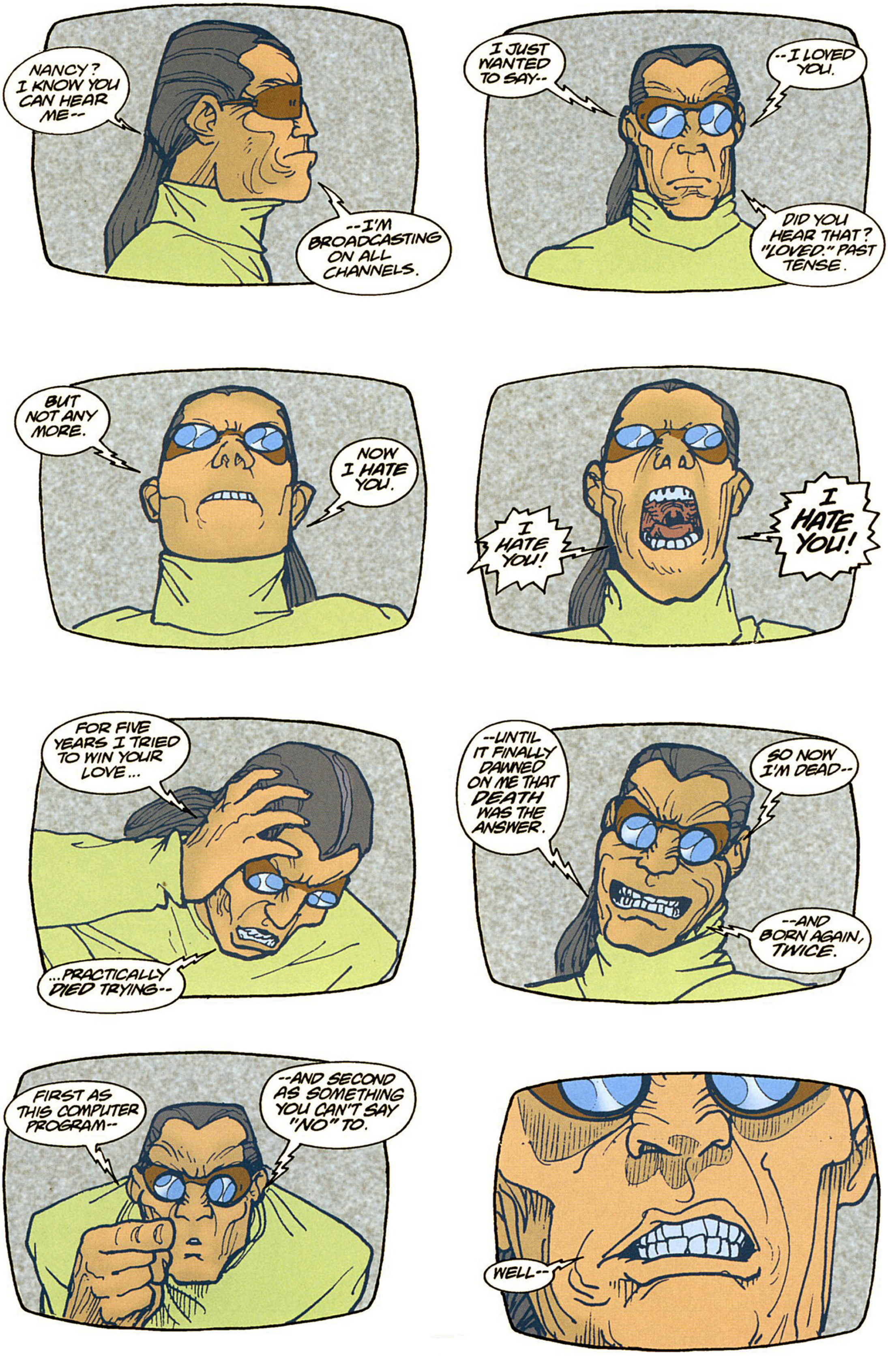

COMPUTER, BEGIN PROCEDURE.
WIRRR
WIRRR.

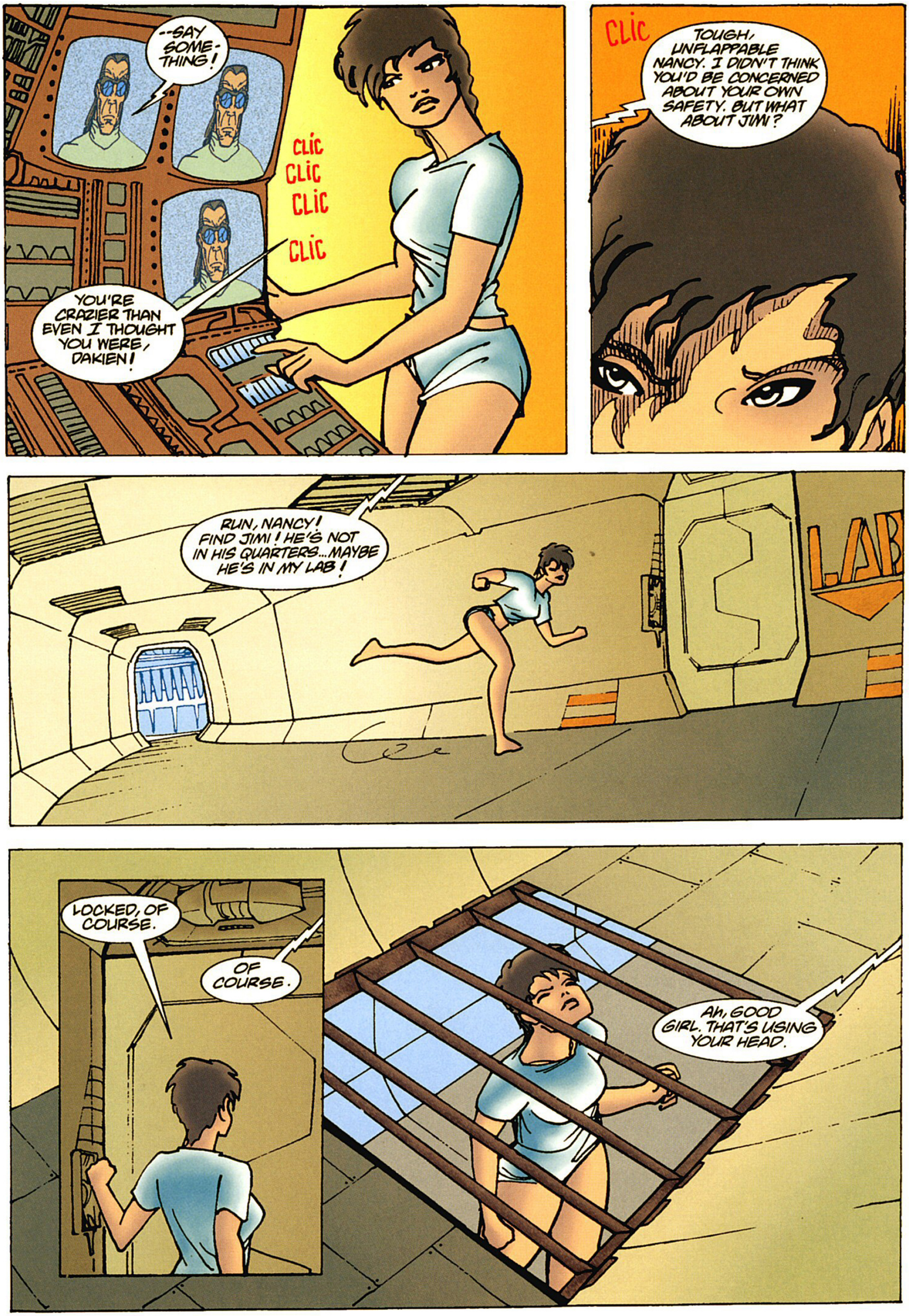

I SHOULDN'T HAVE PULLED THAT KNIFE ON DAKIEN. CRAZY STUNT. UNPROFESSIONAL. BUT MAYBE HE FINALLY HEARD ME.
STILL, IT'S GONNA MAKE THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TOUGH--NOT THAT KEEPING AN EYE ON JIMI ISN'T GOING TO BE ENOUGH TROUBLE.
LITTLE KLEPTO...
WHAT CAN I DO? I CAN'T REFUSE HIS FOLKS THE FAVOR--THEY PAID FOR MY SCHOOLING. NOW I'VE GRADUATED TWICE--FROM SECURITY OFFICER TO BOY SCOUT LEADER.
OH, WELL. IT'S ONLY FOR TWO WEEKS.
FOURTEEN DAYS...
...THREE HUNDRED THIRTY-SIX HOURS.
TWENTY THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED SIXTY MINUTES...
ONE MILLION, TWO HUNDRED NINE THOUSAND SECONDS... SHEESH!

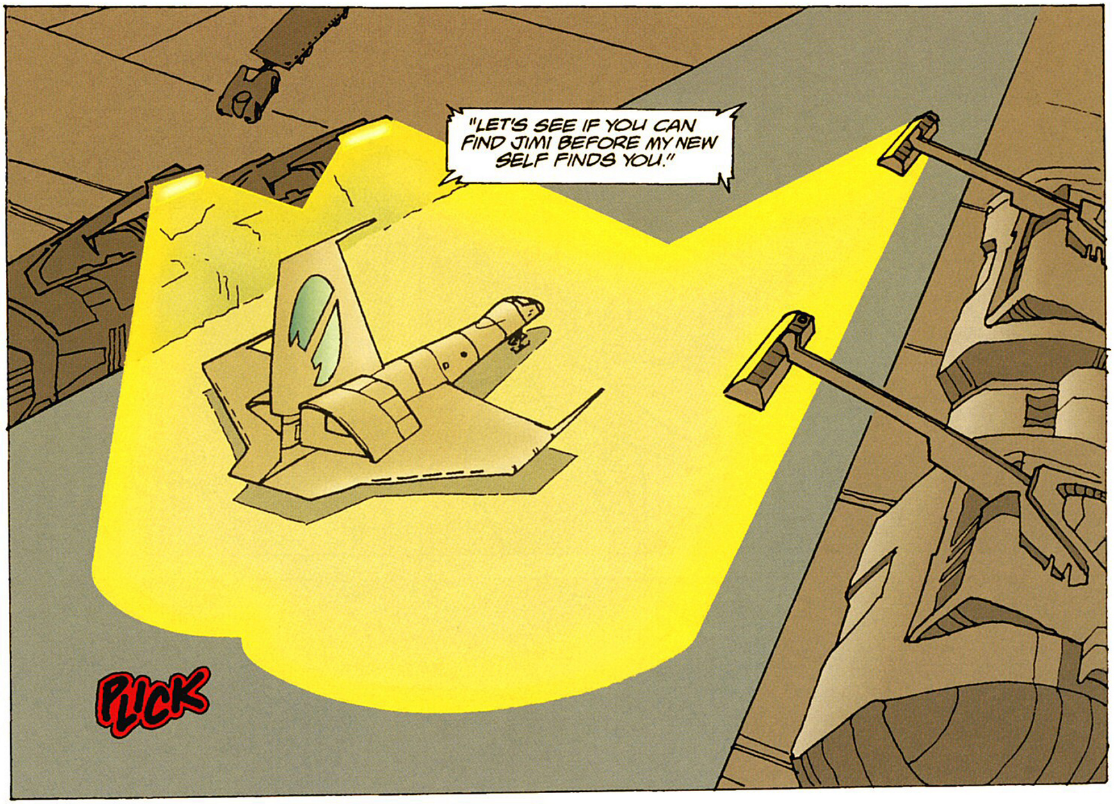

my Summer Vacation.
essay by Jimi.
"how I saved my love nancy."
OH Jimi!
TNT
YOUNG MAN, HOW ABOUT A TOUR OF OUR FACILITIES?
BONUS!
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE WRITING A REPORT FOR SCHOOL, BUT NANCY CAN'T REALLY COMPLAIN--THIS IS LIKE A FIELD TRIP-- IT'S EDUCATIONAL.
WOW!

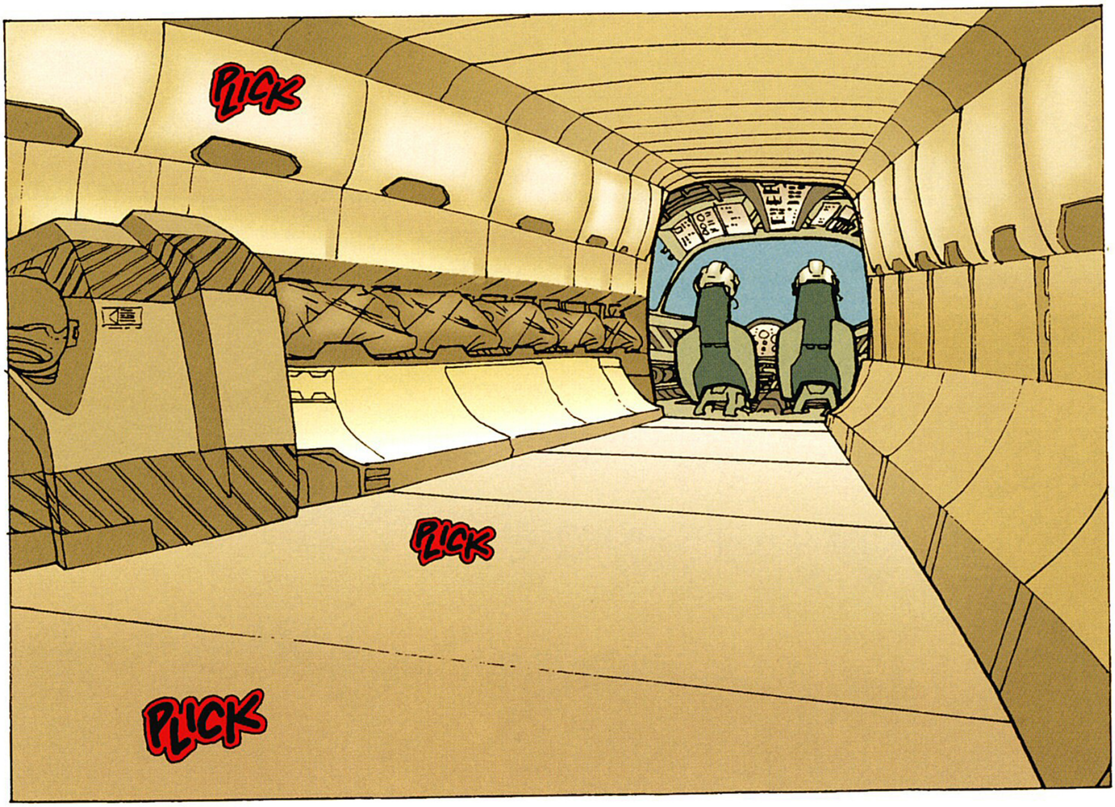

WHAT'S THAT?
AN ORE EXTRACTOR. IT CAN PROCESS THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND TONS OF RAW EARTH PER DAY.

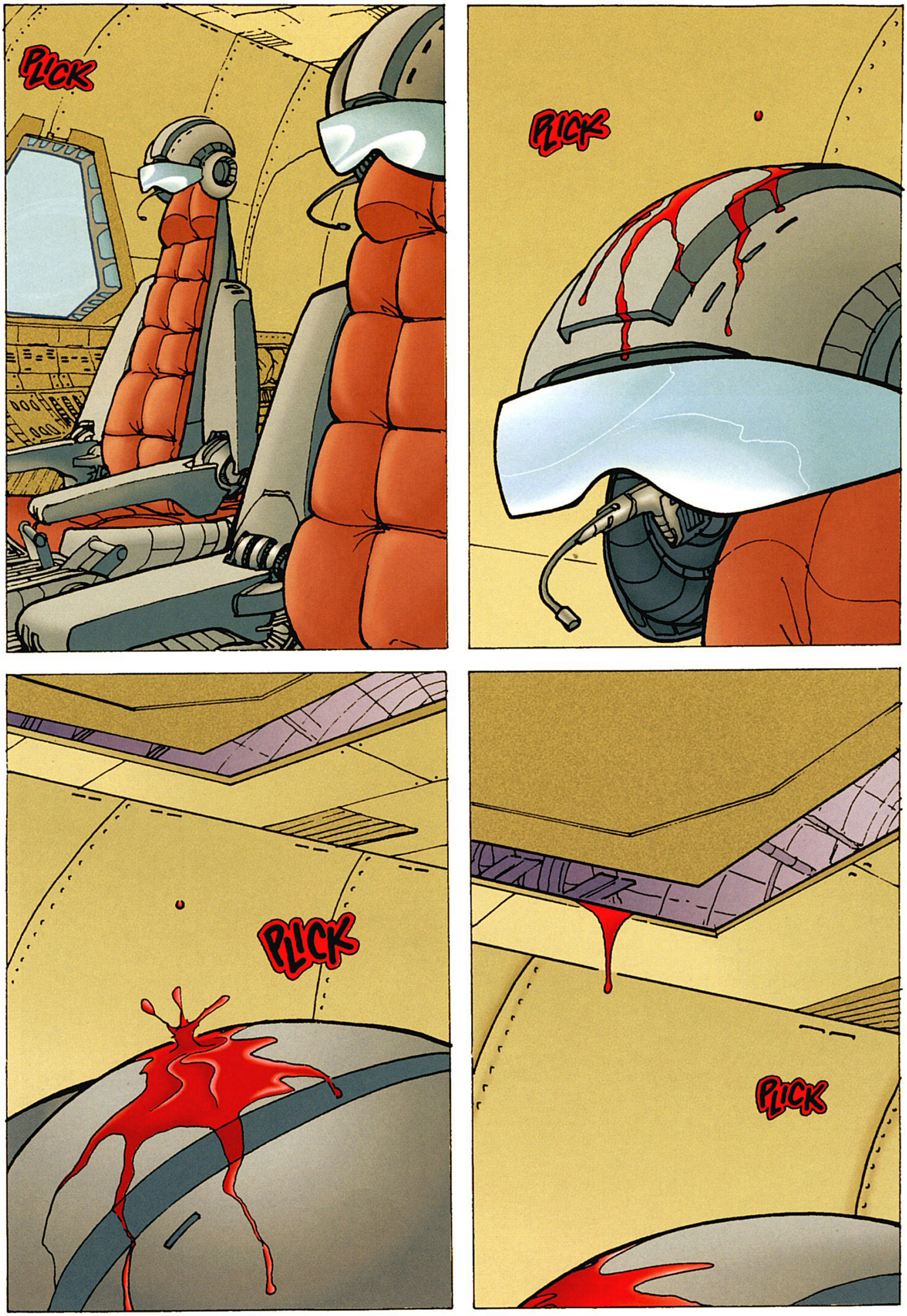

WHAT KIND OF ORE ARE YOU GOING TO MINE HERE?
GOLD? TUNGSTEN?
HEY! GET BACK HERE!
I...CAN'T SWIM!
I WOULDN'T ADVISE IT, ANYWAY. THIS ISN'T WATER, IT'S ACID.
IF I WERE YOU, I'D START WISHING THERE WAS A DOCTOR ON THIS STINKING PLANET, 'CUZ WHEN NANCY FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS SHE'S GONNA KICK YER BUTT FROM HERE TO--
I'M AFRAID I'M ALREADY PAST ANY DOCTOR'S HELP, YOUNG MAN.
BUT DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE TELLING NANCY ALL ABOUT THIS SHORTLY.

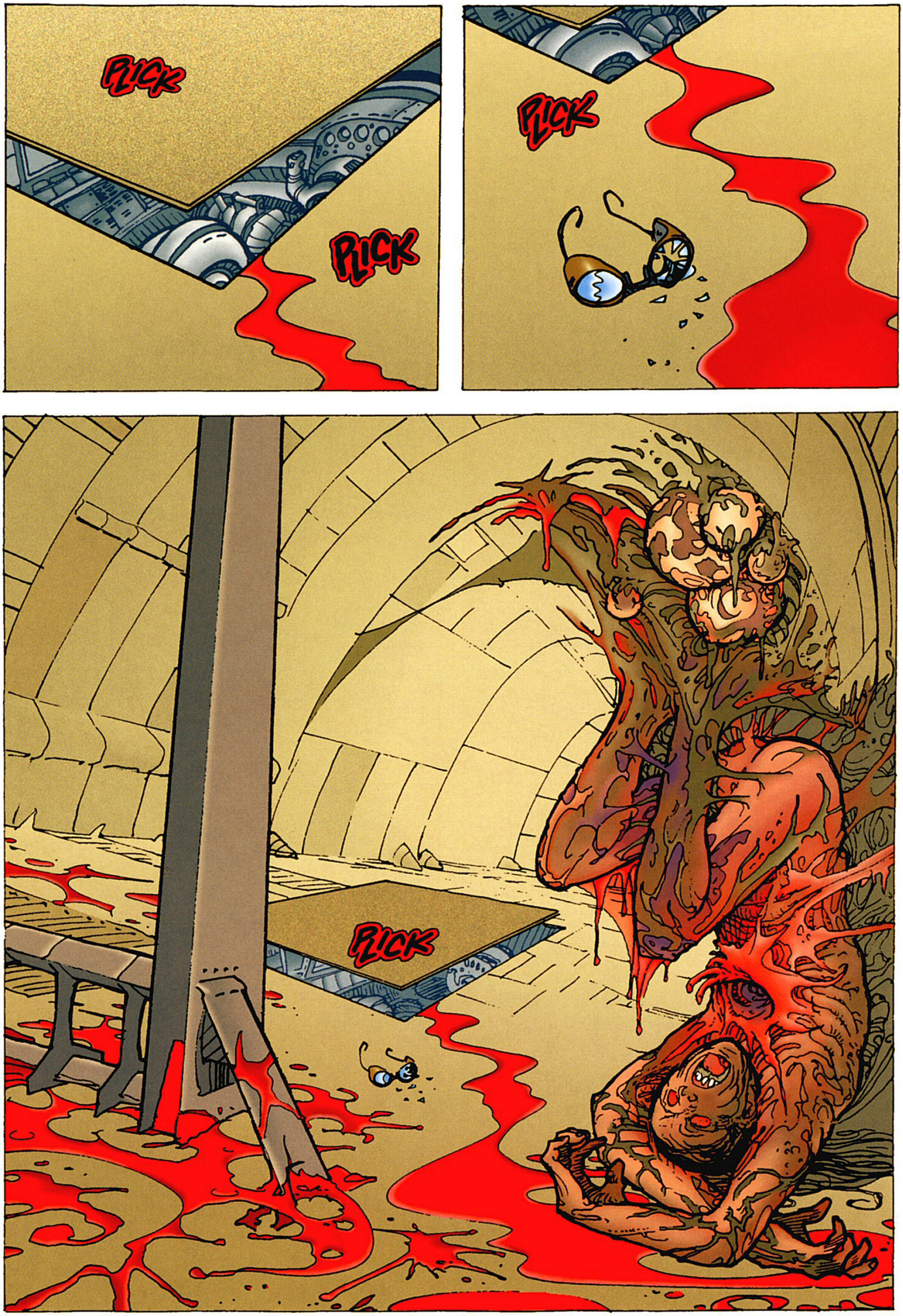

NANCY? I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME--
--I'M BROADCASTING ON ALL CHANNELS.
I JUST WANTED TO SAY--
--I LOVED YOU.
DID YOU HEAR THAT? "LOVED." PAST TENSE.
BUT NOT ANY MORE.
NOW I HATE YOU.
I HATE YOU!
I HATE YOU!
FOR FIVE YEARS I TRIED TO WIN YOUR LOVE...
...PRACTICALLY DIED TRYING--
--UNTIL IT FINALLY DAWNED ON ME THAT DEATH WAS THE ANSWER.
SO NOW I'M DEAD--
--AND BORN AGAIN, TWICE.
FIRST AS THIS COMPUTER PROGRAM--
--AND SECOND AS SOMETHING YOU CAN'T SAY "NO" TO.
WELL--

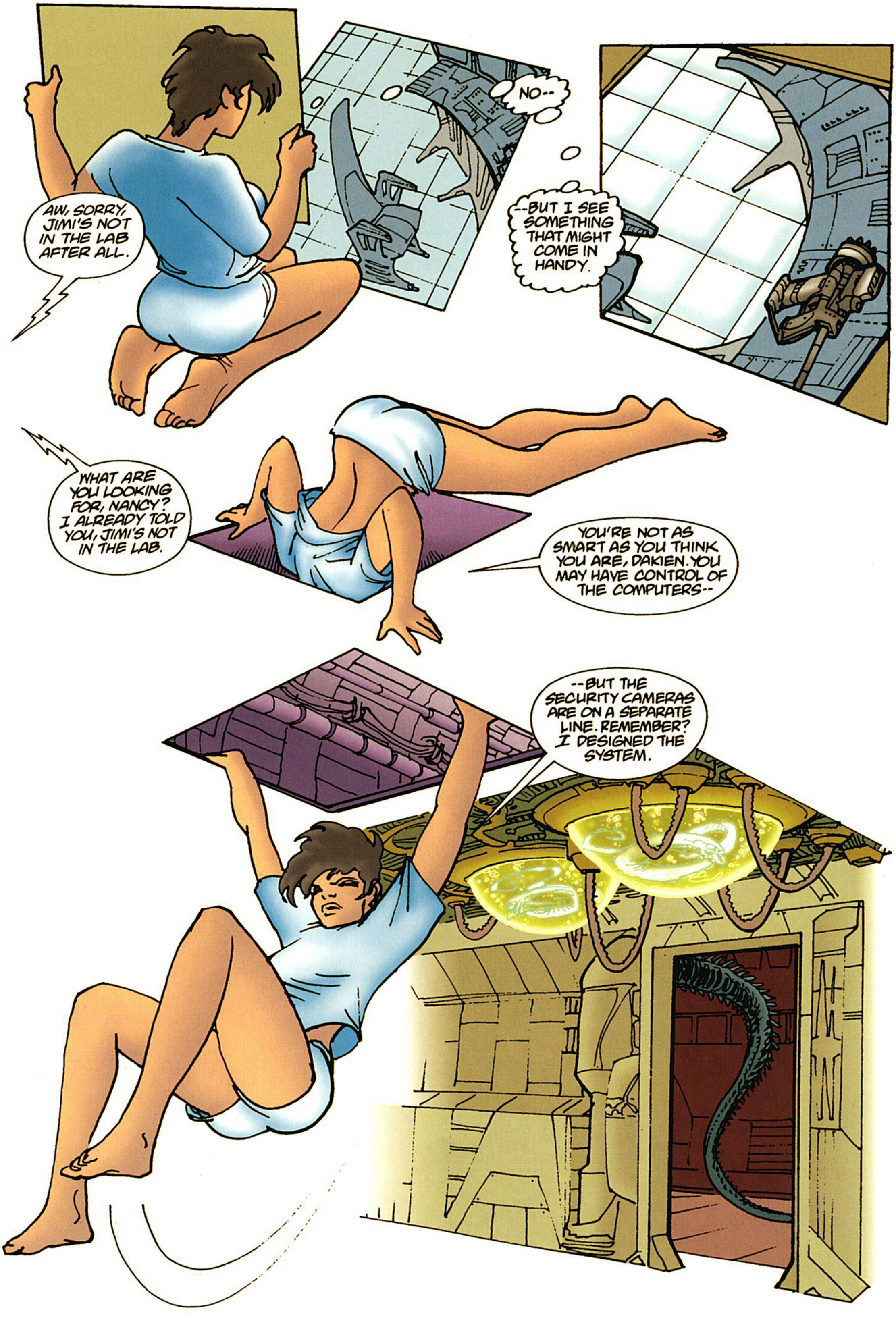

--SAY SOME-THING!
YOU'RE CRAZIER THAN EVEN I THOUGHT YOU WERE, DAKIEN!
CLIC
CLIC
CLIC
CLIC
CLIC
TOUGH, UNFLAPPABLE NANCY. I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN SAFETY. BUT WHAT ABOUT JIMI?
RUN, NANCY! FIND JIMI! HE'S NOT IN HIS QUARTERS...MAYBE HE'S IN MY LAB!
LAB
LOCKED, OF COURSE.
OF COURSE.
Ah, GOOD GIRL. THAT'S USING YOUR HEAD.

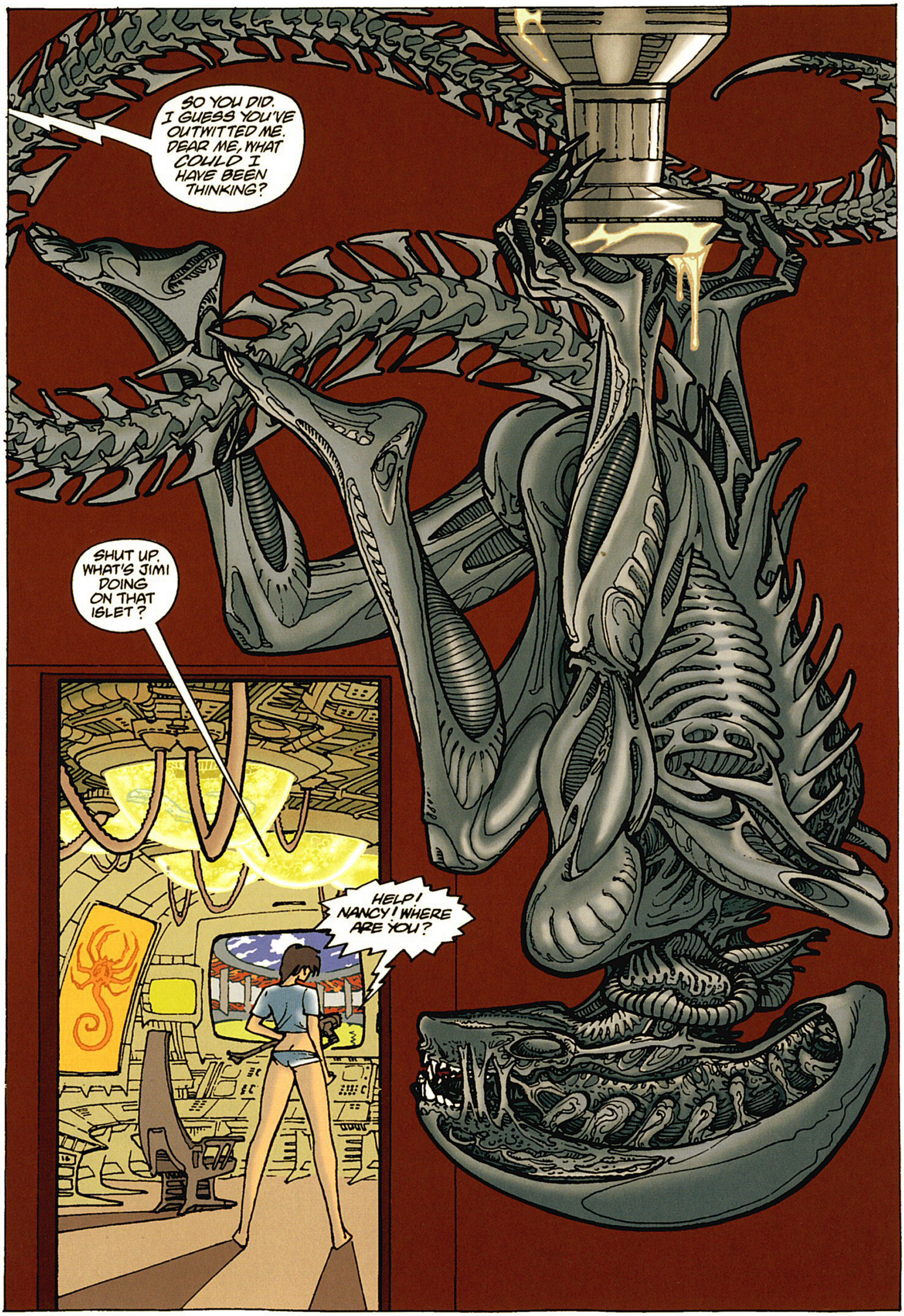

"LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN FIND JIMI BEFORE MY NEW SELF FINDS YOU."
PLICK


PLICK
PLICK
PLICK


PLICK
PLICK
PLICK
PLICK

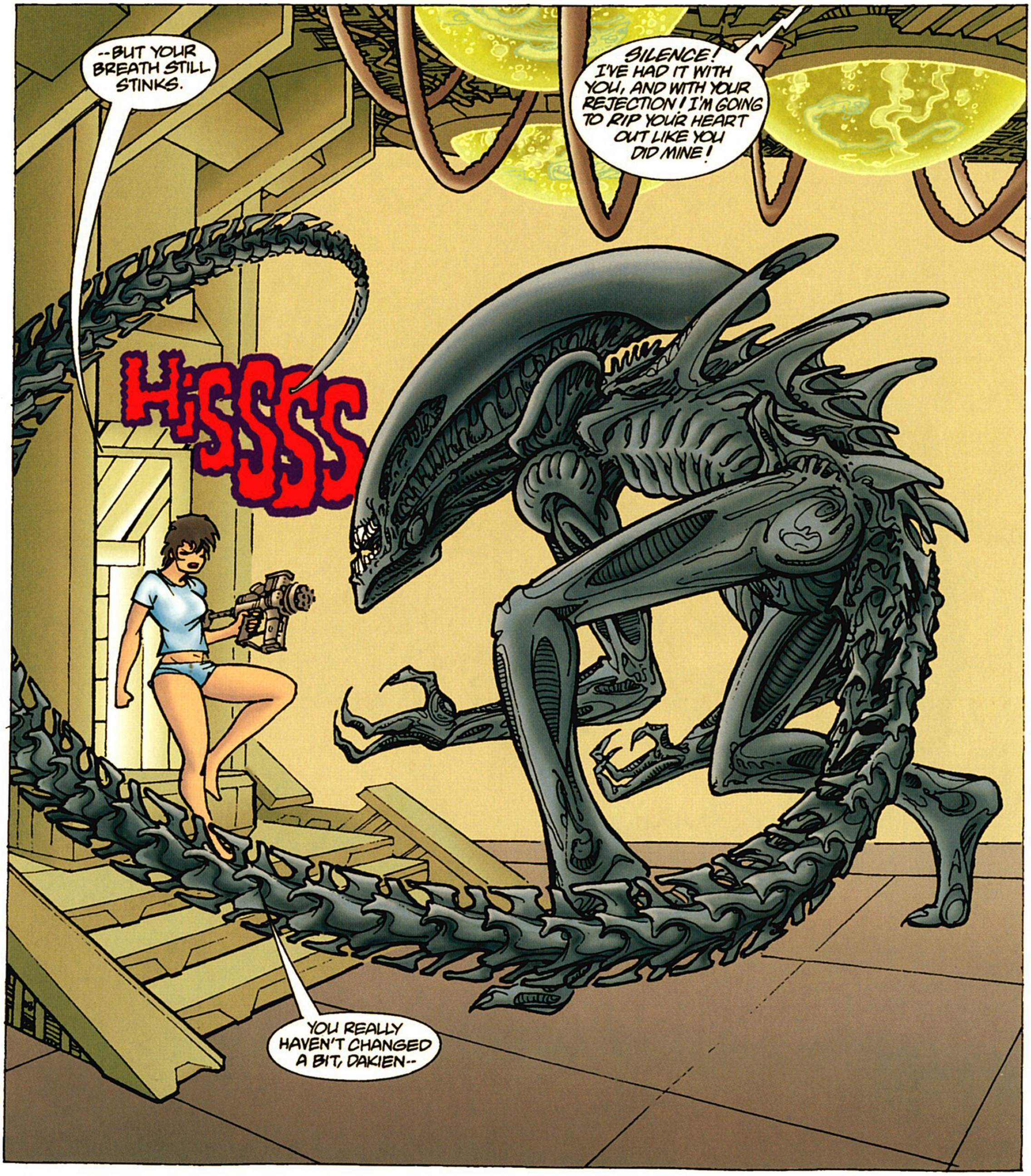

PLICK
PLICK
PLICK
PLICK

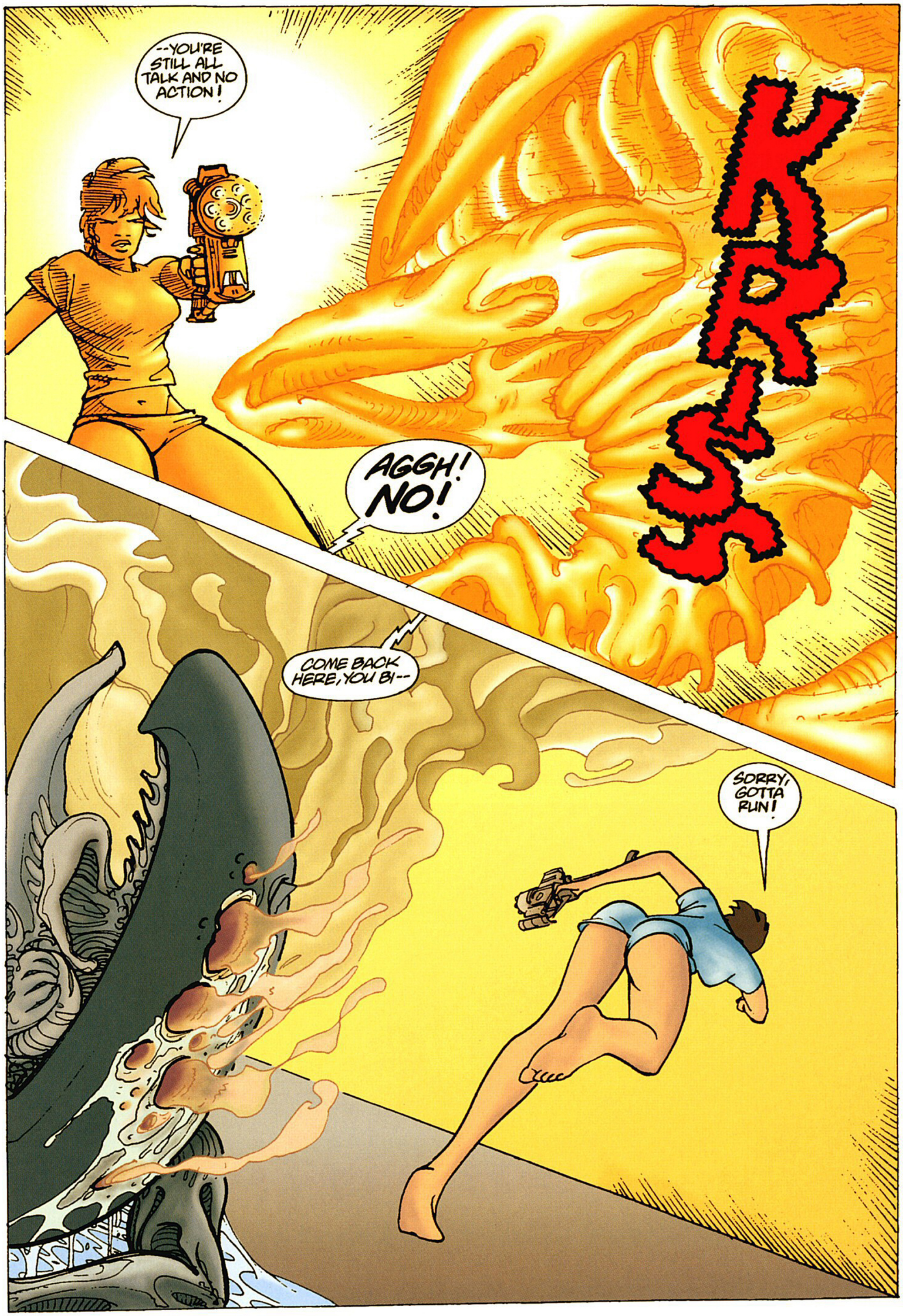

AW, SORRY, JIMI'S NOT IN THE LAB AFTER ALL.
NO--
--BUT I SEE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT COME IN HANDY.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR, NANCY? I ALREADY TOLD YOU, JIMI'S NOT IN THE LAB.
YOU'RE NOT AS SMART AS YOU THINK YOU ARE, DAKIEN. YOU MAY HAVE CONTROL OF THE COMPUTERS--
--BUT THE SECURITY CAMERAS ARE ON A SEPARATE LINE. REMEMBER? I DESIGNED THE SYSTEM.

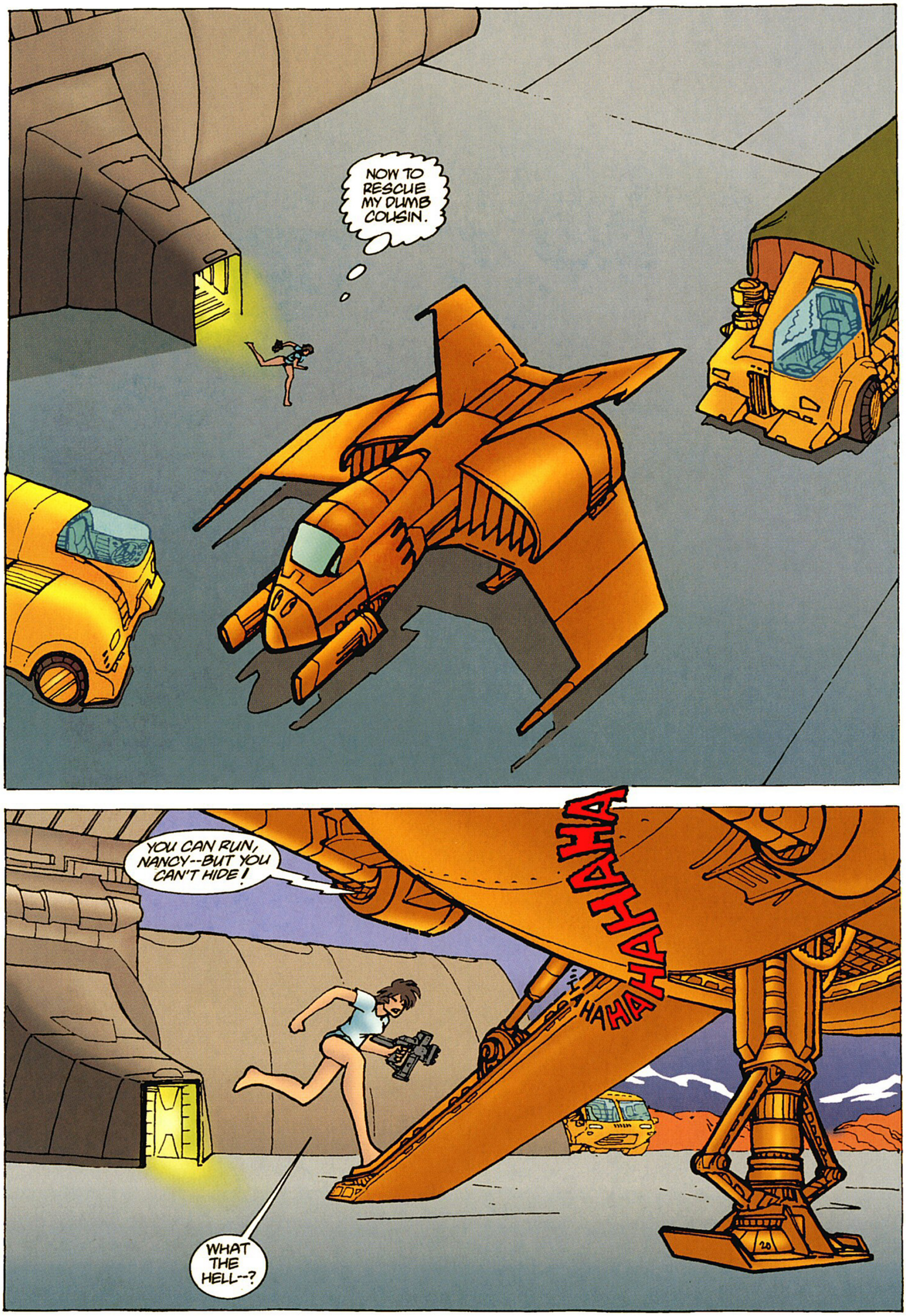

SO YOU DID. I GUESS YOU'VE OUTWITTED ME. DEAR ME, WHAT COULD I HAVE BEEN THINKING?
SHUT UP. WHAT'S JIMI DOING ON THAT ISLET?
HELP! NANCY! WHERE ARE YOU?

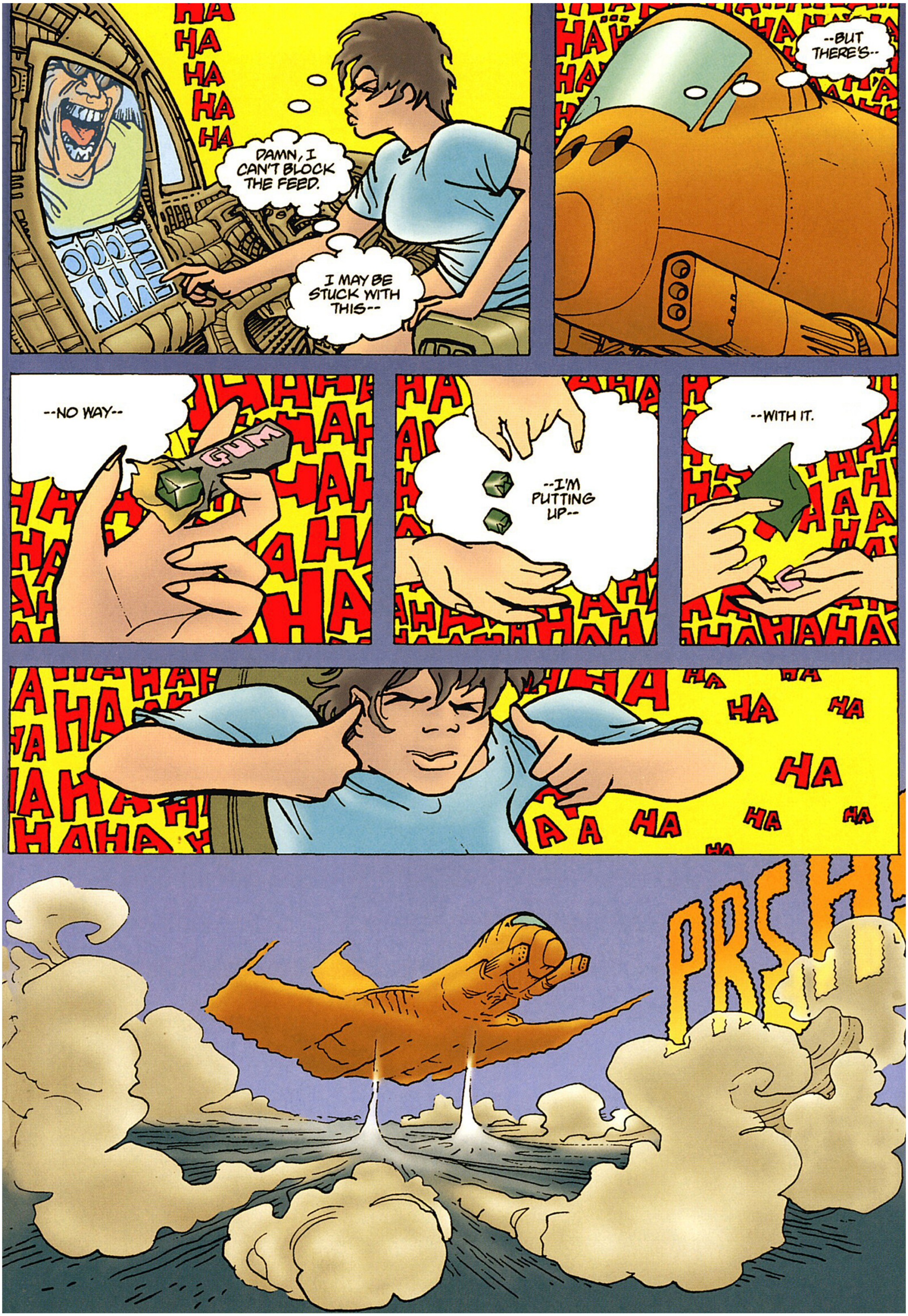
WELL... LOOK WHO'S HERE!
HOW DO YOU LIKE THE NEW ME?

THE LOOKS ARE AN IMPROVEMENT--

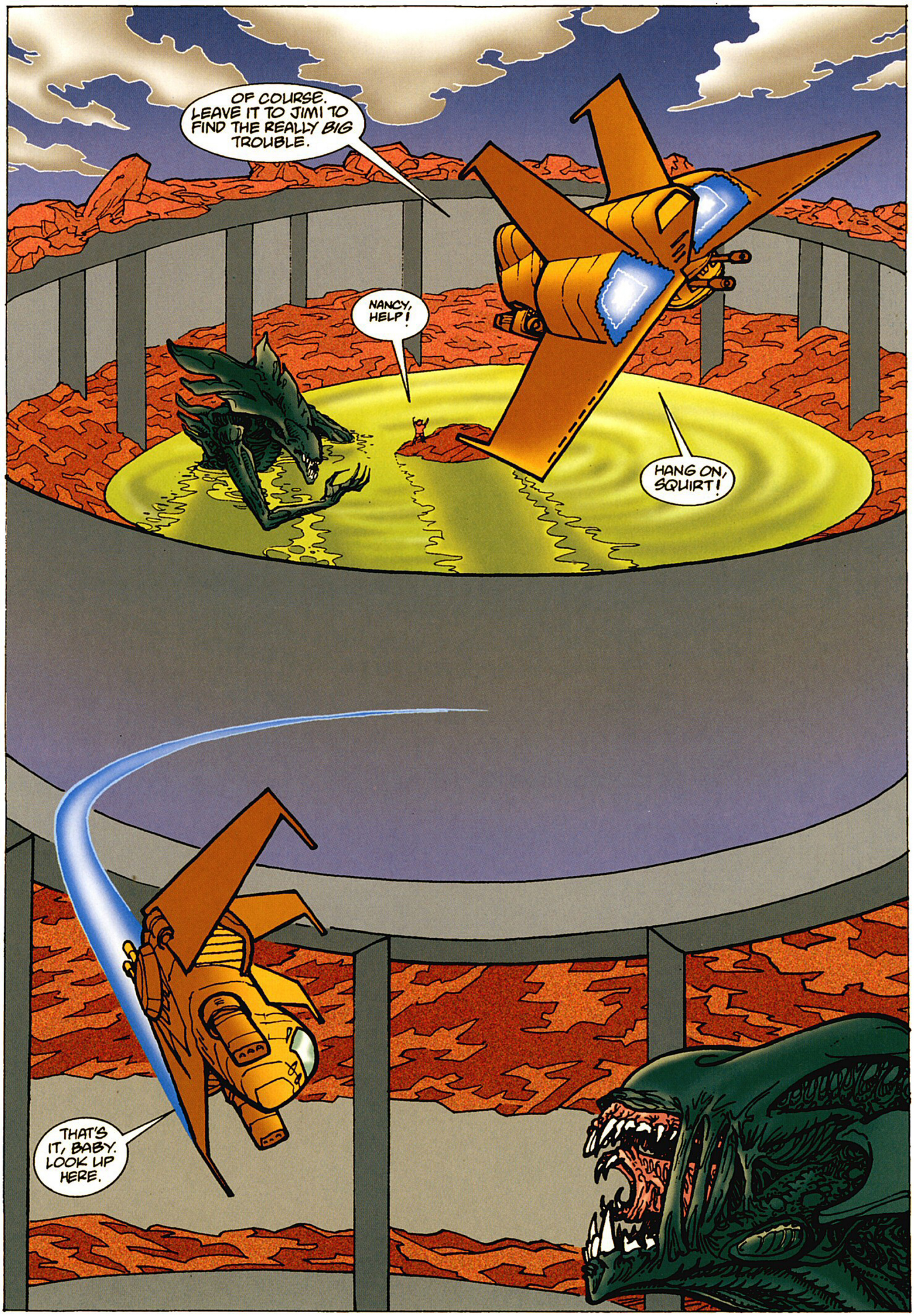

--BUT YOUR BREATH STILL STINKS.
HISSSSS
SILENCE! I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU, AND WITH YOUR REJECTION! I'M GOING TO RIP YOUR HEART OUT LIKE YOU DID MINE!
YOU REALLY HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, DAKIEN--

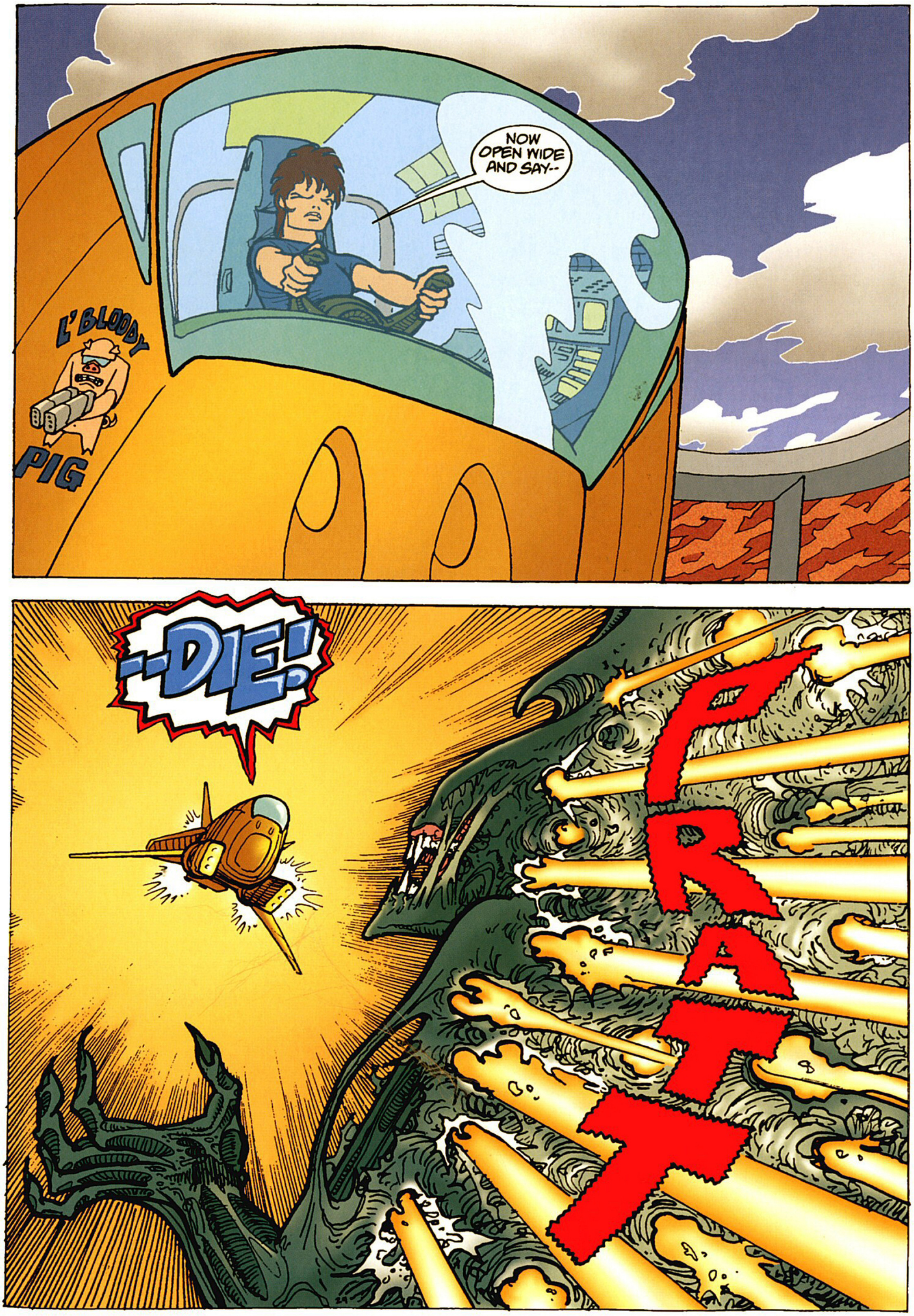

--YOU'RE STILL ALL TALK AND NO ACTION!
KRISS
AGGH! NO!
COME BACK HERE, YOU BI--
SORRY, GOTTA RUN!


NOW TO RESCUE MY DUMB COUSIN.
YOU CAN RUN, NANCY--BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE!
HAHAHAHAHA
HAHA
WHAT THE HELL--?

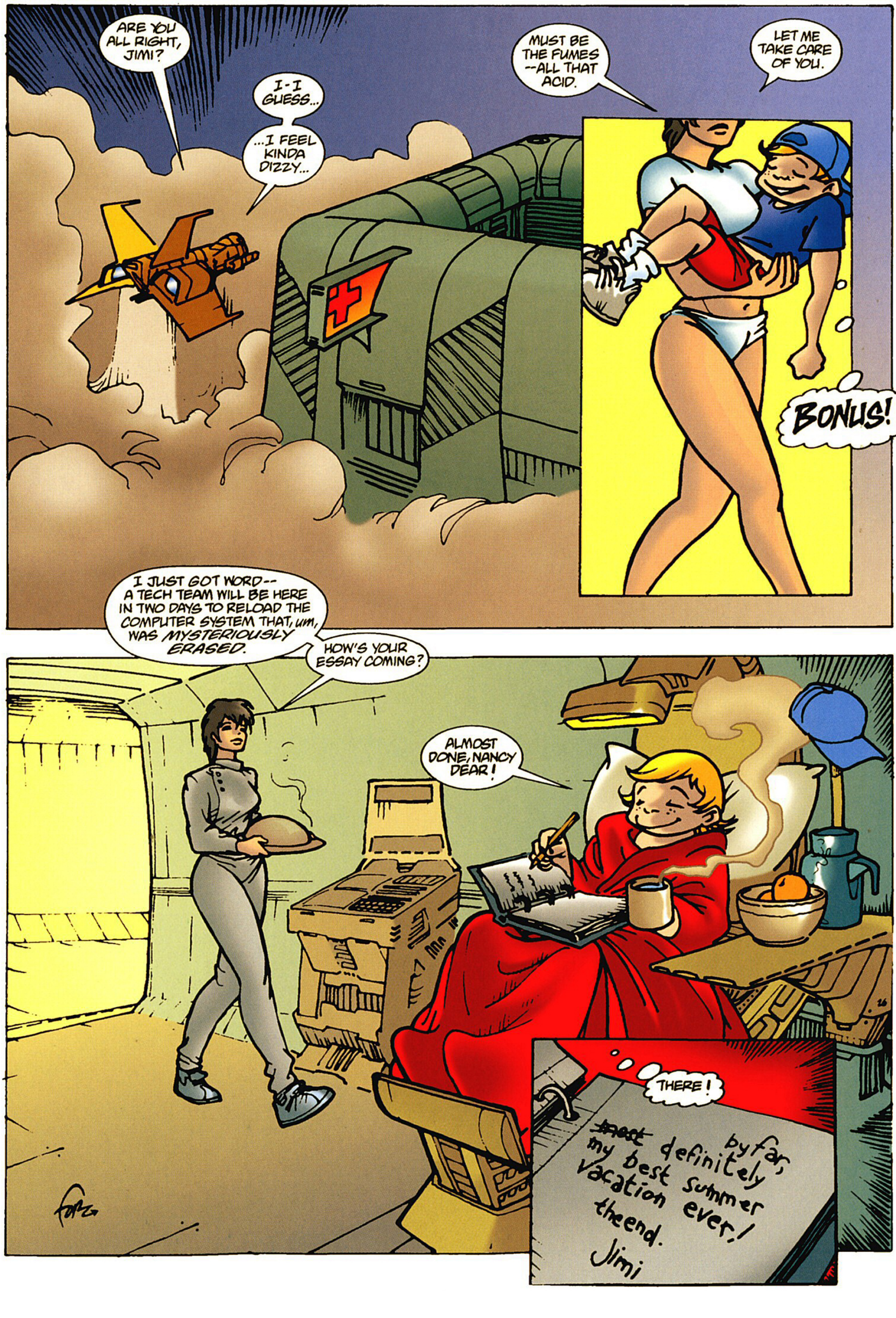

HA HA HA HA HA
DAMN, I CAN'T BLOCK THE FEED.
I MAY BE STUCK WITH THIS--
--BUT THERE'S--
--NO WAY--
GUM
--I'M PUTTING UP--
--WITH IT.
HA HA HA HA
PRSH

NANCY...
...WILL I EVER SEE YOUR... EYES AGAIN?
Huh?
BLORP
HISSSS!
uIp.


OF COURSE. LEAVE IT TO JIMI TO FIND THE REALLY BIG TROUBLE.
NANCY, HELP!
HANG ON, SQUIRT!
THAT'S IT, BABY. LOOK UP HERE.


NOW OPEN WIDE AND SAY--
L'BLOODY PIG
--DIE!
PRATT

LUCKY YOU.
LUCKY ME!


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, JIMI?
I-I GUESS...
...I FEEL KINDA DIZZY...
MUST BE THE FUMES --ALL THAT ACID.
LET ME TAKE CARE OF YOU.
BONUS!
I JUST GOT WORD-- A TECH TEAM WILL BE HERE IN TWO DAYS TO RELOAD THE COMPUTER SYSTEM THAT, *um*, WAS *MYSTERIOUSLY ERASED.*
HOW'S YOUR ESSAY COMING?
ALMOST DONE, NANCY DEAR!
THERE!
~~most~~ by far, definitely
my best summer
vacation ever!
theend.
Jimi

LOVESICK

story
THIERRY GAGNON and **RICHARD FORGUES**

script
THIERRY GAGNON and **RANDY STRADLEY**

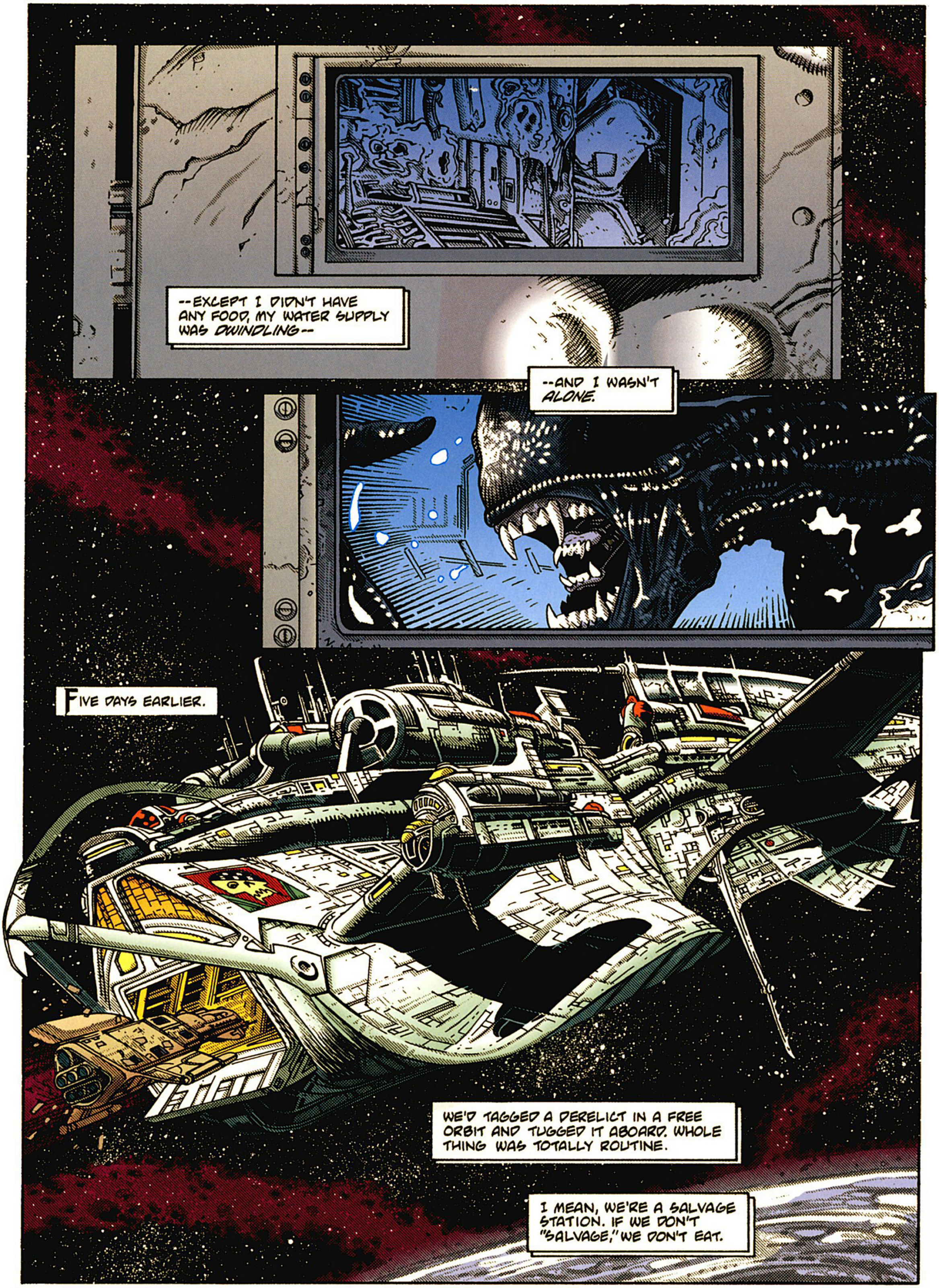
art
RICHARD FORGUES

colors
CARY PORTER

lettering
CLEM ROBINS

title illustration
RICHARD FORGUES with **CARY PORTER**

C'MON, C'MON, YOU CAN GET IN CLOSER THAN THAT...
YEAH-- THAT'S IT--
THE THING IS, RACINE HAD IT IN FOR ME FROM THE START. MY LAST EVALUATION WAS A DISASTER. HE SAID I WAS UNETHICAL, WEAK-- "MORALLY SUSPECT."
HE WAS ALWAYS SO DAMN *CLINICAL*.
IN FACT, RACINE WOULD HAVE HAD MY ASS UP ON CHARGES JUST FOR *BEING* IN THIS RESTRICTED AREA--
--IF HE HADN'T BEEN TAKEN BY THOSE DAMN THINGS.
SEC CAM 327
"YES, SIR, OFFICER RACINE. NO, SIR, OFFICER RACINE. MY APOLOGIES, OFFICER RACINE--"
I MIGHT BE "MORALLY SUSPECT," BUT YOU'RE TWO INCHES FROM *DEAD*--
--AND *I'M* STILL HERE.
FUNNY. IN A LOT OF WAYS, THESE LAST FEW DAYS WOULD HAVE BEEN RATHER *PEACEFUL*--

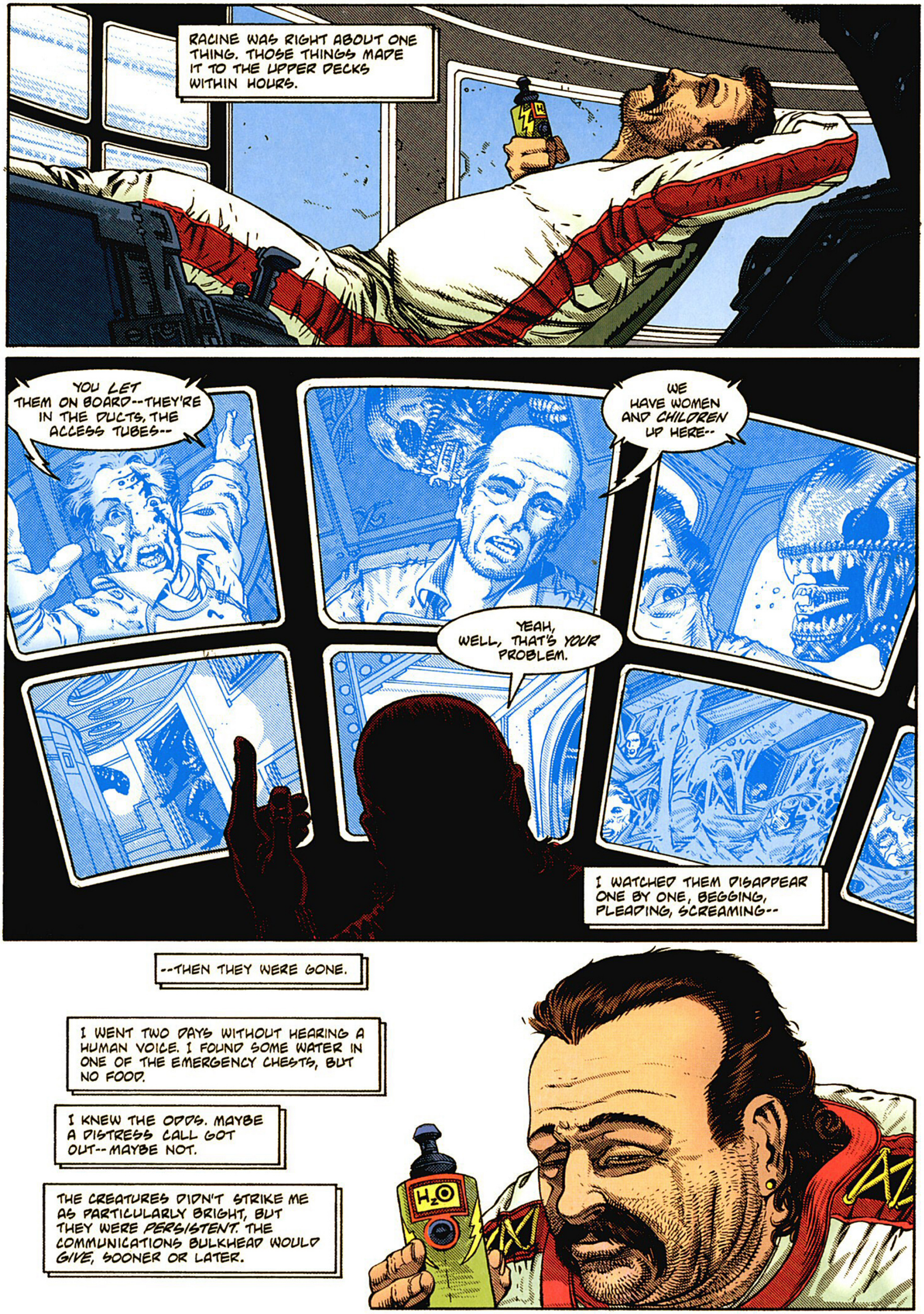

--EXCEPT I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FOOD, MY WATER SUPPLY WAS DWINDLING--
--AND I WASN'T ALONE.
FIVE DAYS EARLIER.
WE'D TAGGED A DERELICT IN A FREE ORBIT AND TUGGED IT ABOARD. WHOLE THING WAS TOTALLY ROUTINE.
I MEAN, WE'RE A SALVAGE STATION. IF WE DON'T "SALVAGE," WE DON'T EAT.

BUT SOMETHING WAS WRONG. I MEAN, I KNOW THE REGULATIONS. THAT DERELICT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO A FULL LIFE-FORM CHECK BEFORE IT WAS *CRACKED.*
YOU DON'T WANT TO RUN THE SCANS?
FORGET IT--THE SHIP'S DEAD. I'LL DO THE FIRST WALK-THROUGH AND CALL YOUR TEAM WHEN I'M DONE.
SCAN 12B
AIRLOC
AIR
JUST REMEMBER, WE GET 25% OF THE SKIM. AND I EXPECT AN HONEST COUNT THIS TIME, KANAKO.
PROBLEM IS, THE SCANS WOULD HAVE TAKEN SIX HOURS. AND WE WERE IN A *HURRY,* AS USUAL.
LOCK DOWN
COMPLETE
25%? YOUR CREW'S GETTING GREEDY.
YOU GET 75% OF ALL THE FREE FLOAT YOU CAN POCKET, AND *WE'RE* GREEDY?
IF THE CORPORATION EVER FOUND OUT ABOUT YOUR LITTLE SCAVENGING "PRELIMS," YOU'D FIND YOURSELF *WALKING* HOME FROM HERE.
AIRLOC
SCAN 12B
BESIDES, WE *DID* RUN A VISUAL. EVERY HATCH ON THE DERELICT HAD BEEN BLOWN, EXPOSING ITS GUTS TO SPACE. LAST TIME I CHECKED, LIFE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO *EXIST* IN A VACUUM.
BESIDES, IF I'D KNOWN SOMETHING WAS WAITING ON THAT DERELICT, DO YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ONE TO GO ABOARD?
WHAT THE HELL...
IT'S A LITTLE PECULIARITY OF MINE. I'M A COMPLETE *COWARD.*
SOMEONE MUST HAVE LEFT THE COM-LINK OPEN. ANOTHER FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF FIRST OFFICER RACINE'S *PROTOCOL.*
AHHH--
WHEN THE FIRST *SCREAMS* CAME OVER MY HELMET'S SPEAKERS, I KNEW WE HAD A *PROBLEM.*

THEY WANTED ABOARD THE STATION. I WAS ON THE DERELICT. IT'S PROBABLY WHAT SAVED ME.
SOME MIGHT CALL THAT LUCK.
THEN I SAW ONE OF THOSE THINGS.
AIRLOCK
MY GOD.
THEY MOVED THROUGH THE STATION LIKE LOCUSTS--MUST HAVE BEEN DOZENS OF THEM--
OH GOD OH GOD--
THEY WERE INSIDE BEFORE THE OFFICERS COULD EVEN BEGIN A RESPONSE.
GET YOUR ASS IN HERE--
EXCEPT FOR OUR VALIANT FIRST OFFICER.
R--RACINE?
MY GOD. WHAT IN THE HELL HAVE YOU DONE?

SO FAR, THEY'RE CONTAINED TO THE LOWER DECK, BUT THEY'LL SPREAD THROUGH THE ENTIRE STATION IF THEY'RE NOT STOPPED.
WE'VE GOT TO FORCE THEM OFF-SHIP.
THE ONLY THING THAT NEEDS TO BE "OFF-SHIP" IS US. WE'VE GOT TO GET TO A LIFE-POD AND EJECT.
THAT'S ABOUT WHAT I EXPECTED FROM YOU, KANAKO.
BUT AS LONG AS I'M FIRST OFFICER, THIS STATION'S NOT GOING TO FAIL, UNDERSTAND?
YES SIR, OFFICER RACINE--
--AND GO TO HELL.
NGHAH--
RACINE ALWAYS FIGURED IF HE YELLED LOUD ENOUGH EVERYONE ELSE WOULD FALL INTO LINE.
YOU--
YOU WANT TO SAVE THE STATION? GO FOR IT.
I'M OFFICIALLY RESIGNING FROM THIS OUTFIT.
I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING MAD.

THE CORPORATION DOUBLE-HULLED THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER TO MAKE SURE IT WOULD SURVIVE A CATACLYSMIC "EVENT." THIS QUALIFIED.
DAMN--
I SEALED MYSELF INSIDE WITHOUT THINKING IT THROUGH. THERE WAS ONLY THE ONE HATCH. NO OTHER EXITS.
OH. NOW YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS.
UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE. THOSE WHO ARE BEHIND THREE INCHES OF STEEL--
--AND THOSE WHO AREN'T.



RACINE WAS RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING. THOSE THINGS MADE IT TO THE UPPER DECKS WITHIN HOURS.
YOU LET THEM ON BOARD--THEY'RE IN THE DUCTS, THE ACCESS TUBES--
WE HAVE WOMEN AND CHILDREN UP HERE--
YEAH, WELL, THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM.
I WATCHED THEM DISAPPEAR ONE BY ONE, BEGGING, PLEADING, SCREAMING--
--THEN THEY WERE GONE.
I WENT TWO DAYS WITHOUT HEARING A HUMAN VOICE. I FOUND SOME WATER IN ONE OF THE EMERGENCY CHESTS, BUT NO FOOD.
I KNEW THE ODDS. MAYBE A DISTRESS CALL GOT OUT--MAYBE NOT.
THE CREATURES DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS PARTICULARLY BRIGHT, BUT THEY WERE PERSISTENT. THE COMMUNICATIONS BULKHEAD WOULD GIVE, SOONER OR LATER.

THUNK
Huh?
I HEARD YOU BEFORE I COULD SEE YOU.
WE'VE GOT ROACHES ON EVERY DECK!
TAKE 'EM DOWN! TAKE 'EM DOWN!
YOU GUYS WERE GOOD. TWO HOURS AND THE ENTIRE STATION WAS CLEAR.
TOO BAD ABOUT RACINE--BUT MAYBE IT WAS BETTER THAT WAY.

FUNNY. WHILE--WHILE I WAS ALONG, I HAD A CHANCE TO *THINK* ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED?
FAR AS WE CAN TELL, YOU'RE THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
WE MUST HAVE DUSTED THE STATION'S MEMORY DURING THE ASSAULT. ANY IDEA HOW THE THINGS GOT ABOARD?
I MEAN, RACINE HAD A FAMILY. THEY WOULD NEED HIS LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH COMPENSATION TO *MAKE* IT NOW THAT HE WAS--GONE.
IT WAS FIRST OFFICER RACINE. HE OPENED THE AIRLOCK--LET THEM INTO THE STATION--
--I TRIED TO STOP HIM--
GOD, I *TRIED*--
I ONLY HOPE THE CORPORATION FINDS IT IN THEIR HEART TO PAY, EVEN *AFTER* THE TRUTH COMES OUT.
IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY PUTTING THIS BEHIND ME, BUT I HAVE TO TRY.
SOME GOOD *HAS* TO COME OUT OF THIS--RIGHT?

LUCKY

script
MARK VERHEIDEN

art
MARK A. NELSON

colors
CHRIS CHALENOR

lettering
WILLIE SCHUBERT

title illustration
MARK NELSON

ALIENS™

Mankind has fought for survival over countless millennia, but nothing has threatened humanity's existence like the murderous Alien scourge. While some have tried to use the creatures' deadly abilities to serve their own selfish ends, no one can dance with the devil, and ultimately only one species must prevail. To that end, men have turned their own lethal instincts and cold intellect against the monsters, creating engineered plagues, cybernetic fighting suits, and even bogus android aliens; however survival rides not on technology, but on the primacy of the most deeprooted, feral instincts.

Dark Horse Comics' critically acclaimed *Aliens* series set the bar for how the universe of a popular film could be expanded through graphic fiction. The *Aliens Omnibus* collection presents these exciting series in value-priced, quality-format volumes, featuring the work of Mark Verheiden, Mike Mignola, Chris Claremont, John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and more!

Aliens Omnibus Volume 1
ISBN 978-1-59307-727-3

Aliens Omnibus Volume 2
ISBN 978-1-59307-828-7

Aliens Omnibus Volume 3
ISBN 978-1-59307-872-0

Aliens Omnibus Volume 4
ISBN 978-1-59307-926-0

Aliens Omnibus Volume 5
ISBN 978-1-59307-991-8

Aliens Omnibus Volume 6
ISBN 978-1-59582-214-7

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus Volume 1
ISBN 978-1-59307-735-8

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus Volume 2
ISBN 978-1-59307-829-4

$24.99 each!

DARK HORSE BOOKS
darkhorse.com

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS SHOP OR BOOKSTORE!
To find a comics shop in your area, call 1-888-266-4226.
For more information or to order direct: • On the web: darkhorse.com • E-mail: mailorder@darkhorse.com • Phone: 1-800-862-0052 Mon.–Fri. 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific Time

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus © 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Aliens™ & © 1986, 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Predator™ & © 1987, 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. TM indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. (BL 5047)

ALIENS™
OMNIBUS
VOLUME 5

Living with the Alien has become a fact of life—and death—as mankind expands throughout the galaxy. And no matter how each encounter with the deadly xenomorphs inevitably leads to disaster, man's hubris and greed just as inevitably fuel the desire to try to unlock the secrets of the demonic beasts' biology or bring the creatures under control as tools to build an even more monstrous future. In this landscape, two things must not be forgotten, must never be underestimated: the eternal, pitiless lethality of the Alien and the blind, monumental foolishness of Man.

Dark Horse Comics' critically acclaimed *Aliens* series set the bar for how the universe of a popular film could be expanded through graphic fiction. *Aliens Omnibus Volume 5* collects more of these comics classics, featuring over 350 story pages in full color by some of the finest creators in graphic fiction, including John Byrne, Mark Schultz, John Arcudi, Richard Corben, Jim Woodring, Guy Davis, Ron Marz, Bernie Wrightson, and more.

DARK HORSE BOOKS
darkhorse.com
graphic novel / science fiction
20th Century Fox
A News Corporation Company
foxmovies.com